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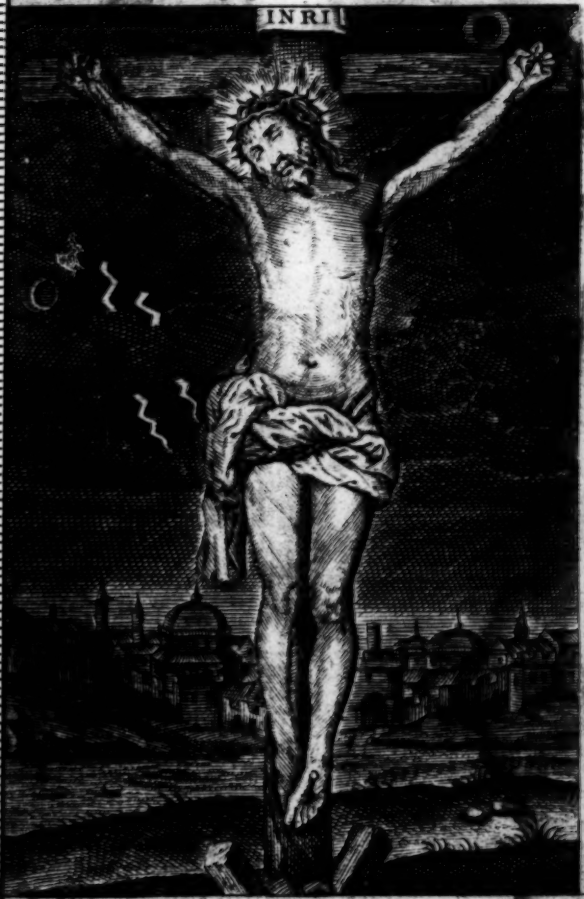

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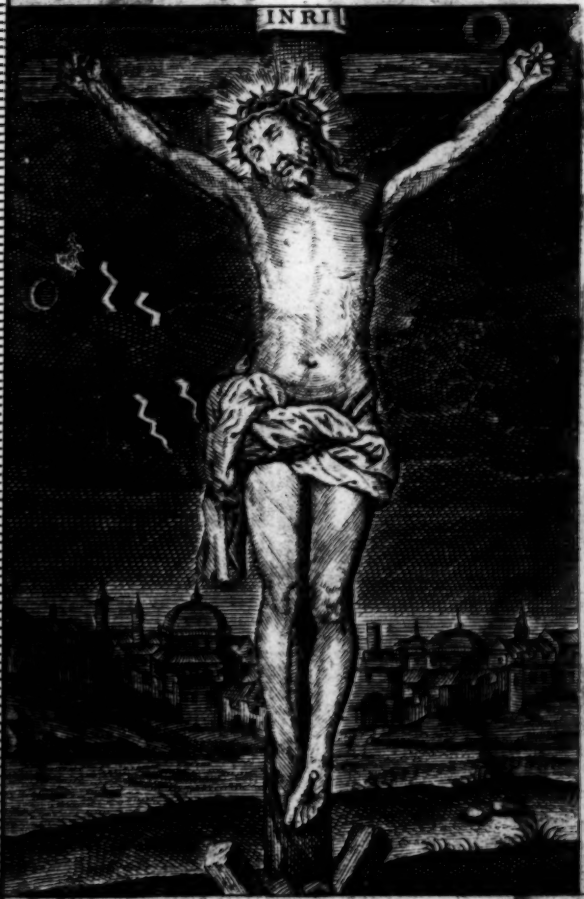

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THE Reformed Monastery; OR, THE LOVE OF JESUS.

A Sure and short, pleasant and easie Way to HEAVEN.

IN Meditations, Directions, and Resolutions to Love and Obey JESUS unto death.

In Two Parts.

The Fourth Edition Revised and Enlarged.

LONDON. printed for *Charles Brome*, at the Gun in S. *Paul's* Church-yard, the West-End, MDCXLIX.

Imprimatur.

Antonius Saunders,
Reverendissimo in Christo,
Patri ac Domino, Domino
GILBERTO, Archiepiscopo
Cant. à Sacris Domesticis

Ex. Æd. Lambeth,
Febr. 16. 1676.

TO THE

Right Reverend Father in God,

JOHN,

Lord Bishop of *Oxford.*

My Lord,

'TIS *not in regard of my Obligations to You, though I own them with grateful Acknowledgments; 'tis not in regard of Your late most deserved Advancement, though I heartily*

rejoyce at it: 'Tis in regard of Your intrinſic Goodneſs, that this Dedication begs Your acceptance, and humbly offers it ſelf to You. Before Lordſhip *and* Paternity *were added to Your Honourable Titles, You was intitled to this Book; Your Dignities being dignified by You: I conſidered not their eminency, but the eminency of Your Vertue and Piety. I know, My Lord, that You aim at a better Reward than this World can give; but that a great Light ſet on a high place cannot be hid from the eyes of*

Men, Angels alone ſhould rejoyce in the brightneſs of Yours: You ſhun Praiſe as much as You deſerve it: You neither deſire nor want any thing of Fame. But, My Lord, I wanted a Living Example of a ſincere and devout lover of Jeſus *to exemplifie my Diſcourſe; and though (God be praiſed) many more might be found in this Church, yet You are one of the faireſt and moſt attractive; inſomuch that though it be eaſier to write than to do well; yet a better Pattern of a Religious Life might*

be drawn from Your *Actions, than from my Directions. My Lord, I have juſt cauſe to fear that I have indulged my Genius too far; and perhaps ſome will think that I would have Godlineſs to be* Shorn, *and Devotion a* Recluſe *from the World; which is far from my thoughts or deſires: Though I muſt confeſs, that at firſt I intended a much different and leſs defective Treatiſe on this ſo good a Subject, had not other neceſſary helps as well as abilities been wanting. However at the beſt I could*

have

have added nothing to ſuch Perſons as Your Lordſhip. The Holy Flames of Divine Love that burn in Your Heart, have too much light and fervency to have received any increaſe from me; and therefore I have not aimed at any thing higher than only to aſſiſt the Weak, and fix the Inconſiderate. But, My Lord, though I cannot in the leaſt profit You by this my poor labour, yet its being owned by You may greatly promote my deſign. Your much Honoured Name will no only credit and recommend my Book, but

alſo

also promote its design of winning affectionate Servants and Lovers to Jesus. *This* I *know You will rejoyce to do. Wherefore in presenting my Book to Your Lordship,* I *humbly beg Your Blessing on it and its Author, Who is with due respect and affection,*

Your Lordships most dutiful

and most humble Servant,

L. B.

THE

THE PREFACE.

IS probable that they, who these many years, have cried out *Popery* (till they made way for it to come) upon every thing they liked or understood not, will start and think that their fears are come upon them, at the sight of the first Title-page; and possibly our Lay-Abbots will also be frighted at it, as though the dispossest *Cœnobites* were coming again to lay claim to their old Mansions and fat Indowments. For my part, I wish that theirs may be but pannic Terrors: yet withal, I wish they might so far affect them, as to make the first have

have a greater value for that *Reformed Religion*, and purer Worſhip, which then they would certainly loſe; and the laſt pay Tithes *Conſcientiouſly* out of thoſe Eſtates, which then they would be forced to reſign. And yet I may, and do aſſure them, that if they will read, not only the Title but the Book alſo, it will certainly cure them of their Fears, if it works no better change upon them: For its deſign is not to alter the eſtabliſhed *Religion*, but to make us more devout and ſincere in the profeſſion thereof; nor yet to inrich any Perſons with temporal Eſtates, but to make us *gather Treaſures in Heaven*, and ſet *our affections on things above.*

That the Age we live in, is greatly depraved, is no obſervation of mine; there are almoſt as many that complain of it, as there are that contribute to the increaſing of its wickedneſs. 'Tis in every mans Mouth,

Mouth, that Vertue being disgraced, Vice is countenanced; and that the numerousness of its Votaries, makes it now impudent, as well as fashionable; therefore it should be no difficult matter, to perswade those that have any sense of Religion, or longing after its rewards, that they ought not *to conform themselves to this present evil world*, but chuse a better Pattern to live by. And the truth is, it matters not much whether these be worse than the former times; for the way to Life hath all along been *streight and narrow*, and found and followed but by *few*: as that to destruction *wide* and spacious, and yet crouded by the *many*. Good Men have always lived in a *perverse and crooked generation*: So that if it be now, as it hath ever been, those that will enter into Life must follow the *narrow* Path, though they have but few Fellow-travellers; and if it be worse,

worſe, they muſt walk with the greater care and warineſs. However it be, the difference muſt needs be very great betwixt the Lives and Works of thoſe, whoſe reward and condition will be ſo vaſtly different at laſt. And therefore whoever will go to Heaven, had need keep at a great diſtance from that *world which lieth in wickedneſs*, and take a much contrary courſe, to thoſe *many* who go to deſtruction.

But how then? Muſt we retire into *Thebais*, with the Fathers of the Deſert? Muſt we confine our ſelves to the ſolitude of a *Monaſtick Cell*? Or ſhall we become Quakers, and profeſs the ſullenneſs of Melancholy Fanatics? Why, truly in Popiſh Countries, the Cloiſter hath ingroſſed the Name of Religion, and they that would be, or be thought to be devout beyond others, do uſually put on a Friers Hood, and imbrace the Rule of ſome *Religious Order*:

And

And amongſt us, Puritaniſm hath uſurped the Name of *Godlineſs*; and ſome who, in truth or in pretence, abhor looſneſs, or are reclaimed from a vicious Life, will too often forſake not the World, but the Church; as it were to preſerve the ſtrictneſs of a ſeverer vertue, in the Society of a Separated Brotherhood. 'Tis not to be doubted, but that long before S. *Auguſtine*, and even from the beginning, there hath been *Civitas Dei, & Civitas Mundi*; *Children of light*, and *Children of this world*: Or to uſe the modern diſtinctions, *the Godly* and *the Wicked*, *Regular* and *Secular* Perſons: Not becauſe ſome have made new Vows, wore diſtinct Habits, or choſen new Guides, and ſeparated from the Church; but becauſe ſome *have lived after the Fleſh*, ſome *after the Spirit*; that is, ſome have followed Gods revealed Will, ſome only their own; ſome have obeyed the Pre-

cepts

cepts of Christ, and too many their own Lusts and Humors. However, I would not make any exprobrations against either *Monks* or *Schismatics* by disobliging truths; rather commend what is praise-worthy in them; because I would have, and 'tis every Christians duty, to be really devout, mortified and precise, without entring the Cloister or the Conventicle.

For indeed I am somewhat jealous, and not without reason, that the ingaging men to be Religious and Vertuous, by other considerations besides their Christian duty, hath done some prejudice to Religion; because now there be some that fansie Self-denial and Contempt of the World to belong only to Friers; and others, that to abstain from Swearing and Drunkenness, is only the part of a Puritan: Whereas Christianity binds those duties on all its Professors, and eve-

ry

ry one, by his Baptiſmal Vow is bound to perform them; though he doth not ſubmit himſelf to the Rule of S. *Francis*, or the dictates of the *Aſſembly*.

Whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report; if there be any vertue, if there be any praiſe, think on theſe things, ſaith the Apoſtle, they are all parts of our duty. Whatever is good in it ſelf, or any ways a means to make us good, is commanded or recommended in Holy Scripture, is contained in the Chriſtian Rule: Wherefore I ſay, the Chriſtian Profeſſor deſigning to attain higher degrees of holineſs, the higheſt pitch of Chriſtian perfection attainable in this life, needs not ſeparate from the Church, nor make new Vows, nor wear diſtinct Habits, but only mind

mind ſeriouſly, and ſincerely diſcharge the Obligations which he lies under, in being a Diſciple, and a Servant of the Holy JESUS.

Vellem univerſos Chriſtianos ita vivere, ut qui nunc ſoli Religioſi vocantur, parum Religioſi viderentur.

My deſign therefore is not to Incloiſter particular Perſons, but to make a large Monaſtery of the whole Commonwealth, at leaſt to make every Family a School of Vertue and Piety, and every man an *Aſcetick* and ſtrict Liver; wiſhing heartily with *Eraſmus*, that they who hitherto have been called *Preciſe* and Religious by way of appropriation, might juſtly loſe that name, by the more exemplary lives of all other Chriſtians.

But though it be my wiſh, it is not my hope in the leaſt, to ſee any ſuch thing come to paſs, by means of this little Volume. Many much bigger and better have not been able to effect it. They that will not hear

hear Moſes and the Prophets, nay, Chriſt the Lord himſelf, will be far enough from being perſwaded by the meaneſt of his Servants: And where the Text it ſelf is not regarded, no Comment can ſignifie much. I mean, that if the Holy Religion we own, be not able to reform our Lives; if the Goſpel which is preached and profeſſed in purity, doth not make us holy, 'tis in vain to expect any other Inſtruments ſhould prevail. But yet our endeavours ought not to be wanting, it may not be in vain to diverſifie Chriſtian Inſtructions; ſeveral ways of perſwaſion may affect ſeveral perſons; and perhaps that which to day is ſlighted, will to Morrow make a deep impreſſion. However it is more or leſs the duty of every one of us, with great *St. Paul* to try all means that *by any means we may ſave ſome*; at leaſt that we may

ſave

save our selves; that if those Arguments which we think most forcible cannot convince others, they may at least move us to take the better heed, *that after we have preached to others, we our selves be not cast-aways.*

Now to this end (having observed how much in all cases, men will do and suffer for Love) I have thought nothing would more conduce, than to make a Christian love God with a sincere and devout affection; a devout Love being undoubtedly not only the best part, but also the best instrument of true Religion; an irreconcileable enemy to Sin; a Friend, or rather a Nurse to all holy Vertues.

No enticement could have drawn penitent *Magdalen* to any of her former sins, whilst in the fervency of her love, she washed her Saviours feet with her tears: And 'tis known by experience, that when

Reading,

Reading, Meditation, the ſight of a dying Friend, or any ſuch thing, hath ſoftned a mans Heart into a Religious temper, Temptations will be then ſo far from prevailing, that they durſt not ſo much as appear before him. But when he returns to mind Earthly things, and hath his Thoughts taken up again with the concerns of this preſent Life, he finds that his ſpiritual ſtrength decays, by the ſame proportions that his Love becomes cold, and he grows indevout again.

Love is the Queen, if not the Fountain of paſſions, the great mover and governour of Actions and Affections: Could we keep the Fire of Divine Love always burning in our Breaſts, it would be the moſt powerful and beſt Inſtrument of Holy living; it would make Self-denial and the Yoke of Chriſt eaſie; it would make acts

of

of Vertue and Religion pleasant; and it would make us delight in pleasing God, as much as we naturally do in pleasing our selves. Therefore I have made it my aim and design in the following Pages, to seize upon the Affections; to inkindle in the hearts of Christians, the heavenly flames of the Love of God. To that end, I have represented the more general benefits of God to Mankind, and especially that of Redemption, by the greatest demonstration of Love that ever was given, the Death of the Blessed *Jesus*; which, if duly considered, would be an irresistible motive to love him. I have shewed the power, the pleasure, and the great advantages of Love; and I have used devout Meditations and Ejaculations, as it were to transport our Souls to Heaven by Love, for to adore that God, whom Love brought down from thence

thence to save us. Tis certain, that most of them that perish, perish for want of Consideration; and I have heard dying men wonder at themselves, how they could be so stupid, as not to mind those things which are of an infinite concern, and should rather take up all our thoughts and our cares, than be neglected or forgot one only moment: *Israel doth not understand, my People doth not consider*, Isai. 1. 3.

Love may be said to be that Fire which God would have always to burn upon his Altar, *Lev.* 6. 12. that is, in our hearts, which are his Temple, where the Sacrifices of good Works, and the Incense of Devotion should always be offered to him: Now that sacred Fire must have Fewel to entertain it; it must be nourished by reading good Books, and especially by frequent and pious Meditations. Wherefore I have endeavoured, as much

much as I could, to feed those holy Flames, by representing things as they are; and I would have every Christian, seriously and often to consider, what God is, what he hath done, what he doth, and what he will do for us, if we love him sincerely: As also, what we are, whence we come, whither we go, and how easie it is for us to be eternally happy, if we will set our affections upon GOD who deserves them so infinitely. Doubtless inconsideration is the cause why God is not loved. It is not possible Men could resist the charms of this Love, if they would open the eyes of their Mind and of their Faith to view them.

But how few is there that mind attentively their obligations to love God? how few that seriously ponder how much it is their duty and their interest to love him heartily, who is infinitely lovely in

in himself, and infinitely good to us? or rather, how fully is the prophesie fulfilled, *Iniquity shall abound, and the love of many shall wax cold*, Matt. 24. 12? To how many Christians might our Blessed Saviour now say, as once to the Jews, *I know you, that you have not the Love of God in you*, John 5. 42? How justly might now S. *Paul* complain, *All Men seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's*, Phil. 2. 21? And how justly might our Blessed Lord, the great lover of Men, complain in the words of his Apostle, *I will gladly spend, and be spent for you*; (or rather, I have gladly spent, and been spent for you) *thought the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved* 2 Cor. 12. 15.

This want of Divine Charity, is a very sad and general evil among st us Christians, in these worst of times: And I have observed,

a that

that even amongſt them that hope for Heaven, the Major part go no farther in their Love, than only to deſire Pardon and Salvation, without ſeeking to make any returns ſuitable to thoſe undeſerved and incomprehenſible Mercies. Againſt ſo much Stupidity and Ingratitude, I have oppoſed the following Treatiſe of Divine Love, or *the Love of* JESUS, which I hope will help to rekindle, or at leaſt ſtir up the holy Fire in ſome Chriſtian Souls, by the Argument it ſelf, if by no other means. Whilſt my Reader fixeth his Mind on this moſt excellent and delightful Subject, his own Thoughts will improve my Conſiderations, and many better may be ſuggeſted to him. And if any ways I can occaſion his Spiritual advantage, and the glory of my bleſſed Lord, I have attained my aim. And now have no more to ſay by way of Preface,

Preface, but that if I have been ſo unhappy as to write any thing contrary to the Doctrine of the Church; I diſown and retract it before hand, and would blot it out with my Blood. As for particular Perſons, who may find fault with any thing herein, I deſire them to paſs it by. It matters not much, if they like not every Paſſage and Expreſſion: If they do but follow what they judge to be good, and approve my deſign, and love *Jeſus* with all their Hearts; it will be enough for their profit and my ſatisfaction.

He that loveth not, knows not God; for God is Love, 1 John 4. 9.

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THE

Reformed Monaſtery;

Or, The Love of

JESUS.

The Introduction.

IT were as eaſie to find out the bottomleſs depth of the inexhauſtible Fountain of the Divine Bounty, as to tell the Streams which run from it; Gods mercies are over all his works, and all things that are made, are a demonſtration as much of his Goodneſs, as of his Being. I will not therefore undertake to number what is innumerable, or to expreſs what we cannot ſo much as compre-

hend; but only inſiſt briefly upon ſome of the moſt general benefits of God to Mankind, and in the repreſenting of them, endeavour to make us read our duty, and to enflame our hearts with Love.

CHAP. I.

Of the general Benefits of God to Mankind, and firſt of Creation,

IT *is God that hath made us and not we our ſelves, we owe* him our very being; *thine hands have made and faſhioned me*; (ſaith *David*) *thine eyes did ſee my ſubſtance being yet imperfect, and in thy book were all my members written*, Pſal. 119. 73. Let us ſay therefore with the ſame Prophet, *I will praiſe thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made*, Pſal. 134. 16. and let *us* with him, *fall down and kneel before the Lord our Maker.* You know that by the Laws of God and of all Nations, there is an indiſpenſable obligation upon all Children to love and honour their Parents, becauſe they brought them into the world: Now certainly the obligation doubles upon every man, in reſpect to his *Father which is in Heaven*; for our natural Parents were but ſecond cauſes under him, his own power it was that formed

med and created us; they engendred our mortal Bodies only, he is the *Father of Spirits*, he himſelf gave Being to our immortal Souls. Therefore let every Man pay to his Maker thoſe duties he would expect from his Child: *If I am a Father* (ſaith God) *where is mine honour?* Mal. 1. 6. If from our Heavenly Father we have received our life and being, let us pay that reſpect, and love and obedience to him, which thereby are become his due.

But there is yet more in this; Creation is not a tranſient act; the ſame power that once gave us our being, doth ſtill exert it ſelf in the continuation thereof. When a Child is born, he ſubſiſts by himſelf, his Parents need not take any care, that he return not to his priſtine condition: but we have the ſame dependance upon God in our preſervation, as we had in our creation; ſhould he withdraw his Almighty hand, we ſhould return to our firſt nothing; *In him we live and move and have our being*: Therefore we are the more bound to ſerve and love him, that he not only made us to be, but gives us, as it were, a new Being every moment, by continuing our life and duration by that Almighty Will, whereby he effected our firſt production.

Now if we conſider further, not only that God made us, but what he made us,

it will yet enforce those bonds of duty which Creation tied upon us. For it was in our Makers power, either to make us vile and abject as the vilest of Beasts, or to deny us those faculties and abilities which are most honourable and most useful to our Nature: But he made us Men, the most wonderful of his Creatures! In us he joyned what Heaven and Earth had most excellent, an Immortal Spirit, created after his Image with the most elaborated, the most perfect of material things. Take a view of the marvellous Organs of thy Senses, of the curious contrivance of those joynts and ligaments which unite thy several Members, of those various and delicate Channels which contain thy Blood and Spirits; in a word, of all the parts and passions of thy Body, which are all made for necessity and comliness; and then admire the great goodness, as well as wisdom of thy Creator; and say with the Psalmist, that thou art *fearfully and wonderfully made*, and that Gods works *are very marvellous*.

After this let thy thoughts dive deeper, and consider thine interior senses; the misterious union of thy Soul and Body, with the beauty of that Divine Light which we call Reason; thy Will, thine Understanding, which are the faculties of thy precious Soul, which is not only created

ted after Gods Image, but is capable and desirous to enjoy him: and then see how numerous, or rather innumerable are the benefits which God hath bestowed upon us in our Creation, and how just it is that *we should glorifie God, in our Body and in our Spirits, which are Gods.*

CHAP. II.

How much we are obliged to God for our Preservation.

PReservation comes next to be considered; a benefit of very large extent, and well deserving that rank the Church hath placed it in, in making it the subject of our daily Thanksgiving; for ever since Man changed the impenetrable Armour of Original Righteous, for a thin covering of Fig-leaves, he became so defenceless, and yet exposed to so many sharp and wounding Arrows, that should not divine Protection interpose for to shelter and secure him, his Temporal Life would be a true and a sad Emblem of Eternal Death. It appears by the history of patient *Job*, that if we were not fenced about with the hedge of a gracious Providence, we should

find that all Creatures conſpire our vexation and ruine. God had no ſooner broke the Incloſure, but Afflictions crowded in ſo faſt upon that happy Man, that in a ſhort time there remained nothing of his former proſperity, but a bare and bitter remembrance, to make the ſenſe of his preſent Miſery more grievous. There is no Man but is expoſed to all the greateſt Calamities that ever befel any of the Sons of *Adam*; and there is none able by his own power, to defend himſelf againſt the leaſt of them. Fortune and Accidents ſport themſelves (if I may ſo ſpeak) with our Goods and Eſtates; Moths fret our Garments, Ruſt cankers our Mettals, Thieves break through and ſteal our Riches, or elſe they *make to themſelves wings and fly away*. Beſides their own corruptibility, which of it ſelf would conſume them, they are expoſed to ſo many hazards, that it would be as impertinent, as 'tis impoſſible to number all the ways and means, whereby Men are afflicted with Loſſes, and brought to Poverty: Only from hence we may juſtly infer, that the ſame God *who gives us all earthly things richly to enjoy*, muſt alſo ſecure them in our poſſeſſion, or elſe we certainly loſe them.

If we look on our ſelves, we ſhall like the Prophet's Man in *Dothan*, 2 *Kings* 6.

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see armed Enemies on all sides of us; our Spiritual Enemies are many, strong, and full of rage and malice; and yet we have no defence against them; but that God makes his Heavenly Host to wait on our safety, incamps his Angels about us, to be an invisible Guard against our invisible Enemies; and not only so, but to secure us also from thousands of sudden and sad Accidents, which might every moment befall us. All Creatures are now furnished with a sting, wherewith they may either vex or kill us. The Elements and all compounded Bodies, the Air we breath, and the Food that nourisheth us; all things in Nature, and all things in Chance, may become our Tormentors or Murtherers. Nay, we carry Swords and Daggers in our own Bosoms; we have within our selves the matter of all sorts of Distempers; not one Joynt in our Bodies but may be afflicted with the Gout; not one Humour, but may overflow its Banks, and quench the light of Reason, or the fire of Life; not one Pore or Part within or without, but may unexpectedly at all times, and in all places, become an Entrance to Death and Sorrow. In the midst of so many and great Dangers, it were impossible for us to stand one moment, but that *God defends us under his wings, and keeps us safe under his feathers*, Psal. 90.

as the *Psalmist* speaks, and so the Blessings of Immunity, which most Men slight or overlook, are never enough to be acknowledged, but deserve the Thanks of a whole Life. *We dwell under the defence of the Most High, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty: therefore let us set our love upon him and glorifie him.*

CHAP. III.

Of the Positive Blessings of this Life.

THE Positive Blessings of this Life, are now to be exposed to view; but of them I may use the words of the *Psalmist*, *If I would reckon and speak of them, they are more in number than can be numbred*, Psal. 40. Health, and Strength, and Comliness, with Industry and Learning, are shared among the Sons of Men in several proportions; and so are good Friends and a good Name, Peace, Plenty, and Pleasures; any one of those single, might make a rich portion for one Man, for each within it self contains many rich and precious Blessings; yet oftentimes God unites all or most of these together, *to crown us with Loving-kindness and tender Mercies*, Psal. 103. The Works of Creation, and the Works of Provi-

Providence are not more numerous, than the graces and gifts of God to Mankind; any one that should seriously meditate upon this Subject, would find it multiply and increase almost to immensity, and would be forced to break off with the Exclamation of *David*; *Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the Son of man, that thou so regardest him?* Psal. 8. 4. God renews his Mercies to us every day together with our Lives; every hour *we eat of the fatness of his House, and drink of the River of his pleasure*, Psal. 36. and receive the sweet emanations that flow continually from *the Fountain of Life*.

But of those Benefits which God pours open hands upon us, how many are there that pass unregarded! we usually mind, not what we receive, but what we desire. Let Heaven rain Manna never so thick upon us, if we wish for Quails, Angels food shall be unsavory, and perhaps distastful. They that long for great and well covered Tables, find no relish in their daily Bread; they that pursue after Wealth, look not on the Blessings of Competency; they that aspire to Honour, receive Health, Food and Raiment, rather with a disdainful Anger, than with Thankfulness; all the Favours we receive from God, are unobserved or slighted, so long as he doth not

gratifie our humor with what we deſire, and even thoſe gifts whereof we are moſt ſenſible, are ſoon laid in oblivion; an hours pain will cauſe many longer pleaſures to be forgotten; and if God ſends evil upon us only for one day, it makes us forget the many good things, which we for many years received from him. This I ſay, becauſe many Mens unſatiableneſs and ingratitude makes them overlook moſt of God's Bleſſings, deſpiſe what they have, and value only what they have not; and ſo murmur and complain when they ſhould give thanks. But whoever ſhall diligently obſerve all the gracious diſtributions of that God, who always giveth to all Men, being debtor to none; all the ſupplies and comforts we receive from him, will heartily ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *O love the Lord all ye his Saints*; and, *O that men would therefore praiſe the Lord, for his goodneſs, and declare the wonders that he doth for the Children of men; that they would exalt him in the Congregation of the People, and praiſe him in the Seat of the Elders*, Pſal. 31. 107.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

What returns we should make for Temporal Blessings.

THose Benefits we have hitherto mentioned, we receive as we are Men, and that, from the free goodness of our gracious God; *We are his People and the Sheep of his Pasture*; we are, and we have nothing that is good, but it comes from him; he made us, he preserves us, and he provides for us; therefore, *O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his Courts with praise, be thankful unto him and speak good of his name.* It was *Jacob's* Vow, that if God would keep him, and give him Food and Raiment, whilst he sojourned in *Haran, then the Lord should be his God*: Now what was his Vow, should be our resolution and practice; God feeds, and cloaths, and defends us, therefore he ought to be our God; That is, we ought to own him for such by faithful service and hearty obedience. Therefore, 1. Let us pay our bounteous Benefactor the just and easie Tribute of Praise and Thanksgiving, for our Creation Preservation, and all the Blessings of this Life. 2. Let us set apart daily some of that time which he gives us, for acts of Worship and Reli-

Religion. 3. *Let us honour the Lord with our substance*, either in secret Charities or publick Offerings, paying him an acknowledgment, that he is our Land-lord; and lastly, let us apply our selves to observe his Laws, to do what pleaseth him; because we are not our own, we owe our selves to him, we are his, he gave us our Being. These are acts of natural Religion, and them we owe to God, as he is our Creator and Benefactor.

CHAP. V.

Of the Mercies of Redemption, and first, a consideration of the infinite Miseries we were redeemed from.

NOw are to be considered the benefits we receive from God, as we are Sinners; the Mercies of our Redemption; how God our Creator is become *Jesus*, our Saviour; how after having given us many good things, he at last gave himself for us. And that we may the better understand the greatness of this unspeakable and Divine Mercy, let our Meditation descend a while into that bottomless Gulph of Perdition, wherein we were plunged by Nature, God being the center of rest and that infinit good which alone can make us happy: being also

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so holy, altogether righteous and just, of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity: It thence clearly follows, That that joy and comfort of Communion with God, which is the life and the felicity of rational Creatures, must be annex'd to the imitation and resemblance of his goodness; and that Men by being evil, by contrariety of nature, must forfeit the favour of God and the sense of his love, and thereby cutting themselves off from having communication with the fountain of bliss, must become altogether miserable.

This being the case of all Men, who by nature, by their depravedness were the Children of Wrath; enslaved to vile lusts, distracted by unruly passions, alienated from God and Goodness, so sinful, so wretched, that if left to themselves, they cannot but sink into Perdition; that bottomless gulf of Perdition, which is represented by a Fire that shall not be quenched, a Worm that never dies, a State of horror and darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, where anguish and despair make their condition hopeless and remedyless to all Eternity. O dreadful word, *to all Eternity!* without intermission, without end, that after Thousand and Millions of Years, still their Miseries are as far from any prospect or expectation of coming to an end,

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as they were the first day. Plunge thy thoughts a while into that Abyss of Perdition and unspeakable Sorrow, and the more dreadful and intollerable it appears, the more thou shalt be excited to bless one Mercy, which hath found out a way most gracious and most wonderful, by substituting in thy place a victim of infinite Dignity, and infinite Merit, to save thee from the Punishments, which by Sovereign Justice is due to vile and guilty Criminals; and by a sanctifying Grace renewing thy nature, and subduing thy corruptions, to turn and recal thee from those Iniquities which made thee polluted and miserable, and to reconcile thee to God, in whose favour thou mayest have Life and Happiness. The astonishing Grace and Mercy of Gospel Redemption, is best understood by considering whence we were redeemed; and that loving-kindness of God our Saviour towards Men, in sending down from Heaven his blessed Son, to save them from their Sins, and from the Wrath to come, is most valued and regarded, when we are most sensible of the greatness and dreadfulness of that ruin and Misery, into which we and all Mankind were fallen. So we see when Men are on the brink of the Grave, how they are affected with the Faith of Christian Redemption? how they depend

depend on their Almighty Saviour, and with their Souls, as it were, cling about his Croſs; becauſe then they have the cleareſt proſpect of Eternity, and ſo can make the better eſtimate of that Salvation Chriſt purchaſt for us. The offers of it will then be embrac'd with the greateſt affection, when we ſeriouſly conſider and weigh the importance thereof, the anguiſh and tribulation from which we are relieved, and the Joys and Glories to which we are called, by the Preaching of the Goſpel.

Though we never ſuffer'd the Horror, and Agonies of periſhing undone Sinners, yet ought we to look on our ſelves as being by the meer pity and ſuccour of our bleſſed Redeemer, brought out and ſnatcht from the bottomleſs Pit, deliver'd out of the Priſons of Eternal Darkneſs. For ſuppoſe that two Men are equally indebted, and equally unable to pay; the one is patiently forborn, and at laſt freely acquitted; the other is caſt into the Dungeon, and a while after compaſſionately releaſt and ſet at liberty: Is not he that never entred the Priſon, as much bound to love his generous Creditor, as he that was delivered out of it? Yes, doubtleſs, or rather more; becauſe his Debt is alſo forgiven, and yet he is freed from that trouble and

ſorrow

sorrow, which his Fellow Debtor underwent. Why then, thy gracious Redeemer, by saving thee from the horrors and torments of Hell, hath laid on thee at least as great obligations to love him, as if he had brought thee out of it, after thou hadst been long detained therein. Therefore bring thy thoughts back again to that unpleasant abode, and consider thy self as if thou were shut up in that dismal Dungeon, and then express what thou wouldst give to be releast, what thou wouldst do for him that should bring thee out of that horrible and bottomless Pit.

I know that they that are afflicted with sharp pains and grievous sicknesses, would purchase health with all the wealth they have; and I believe no reward would hire a man to hold his hand in the Fire but for one hours time: Therefore I doubt not but that, if it were in a mans power, he would this, and a thousand more Worlds, to be brought out of an ever burning Furnace; and I am perswaded, that if thou wilt suffer thy Fancy to be active in framing the black and dreadful Scene of Hellish horrors about thee, thou wilt then heartily say; Were I owner of the whole Universe, I would joyfully part with it to be freed from this misery, freely would I give my self to him that should bring me out of this woful

woful place. I would follow him any where, do any thing that he should command, embrace his Feet, kiss the ground they tread on, and give him all the demonstrations of a sincere and passionate Love!

Well, thy Petition is granted before 'twas presented; the Love and Mercy of Jesus hath prevented thy request and distress. Now make good thy Vows and Resolutions! Love and Serve Jesus thy Redeemer, and give thy self up wholly to him. I know that many may be good Christians without *being snatcht out of the Fire*, without these terrors and affrightments; But I am shewing what our condition had been without a Saviour; what is that Gulph of Perdition whence Jesus hath saved us, if we will be saved by him: And I mention these *affrighting Truths to perswade men*; to be motives of an active and a vehement Love. For 'tis too observable, that few men seriously consider what *Redemption means*, what it was we were redeemed from, else they could not be so indevout, so disobedient, so unthankful to their Saviour. S. *Paul* supposing, as I do here, that without Christ we were already dead and perisht, makes it the reason of that *Constraining Love* which enabled him and other Primitive Christians to suffer so patiently, and act so zealously for Jesus; *The love of Christ* (saith he)

he) *conſtraineth us, becauſe we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.* As if he ſhould ſay, we were certainly dead, irrecoverably loſt, had not Chriſt died, to purchaſe life and ſalvation for us; therefore we cannot chuſe but love him, and it is no wonder if that love be ſtrong, and if we are governed and acted by it. That thou maiſt therefore love affectionately and live religiouſly, conſider ſeriouſly that death, the miſery of that condition from which thou haſt been ſav'd and delivered by the Bleſſed Jeſus; and with the greateſt zeal and affection thy Soul is capable of, reſolve with King *David*, and make it good all the days of thy life. *I will thank thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and I will praiſe thy name for evermore, for great is thy mercy towards me, and thou haſt delivered my Soul from the nethermoſt hell,* Pſal. 86, 12, 13.

CHAP. VI.

How graciouſly and wonderfully we were Redeemed.

A Further engagement to love and obey our Dear Redeemer will be, to conſider the manner how our Redemption was effected, and the price that was paid for it, thus:

thus: The Blessed Son of God, the Second Person of the Ever glorious Trinity, undertook that work himself which none else could perform: *For us men, and for our salvation he came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the H. Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, and was made Man.* In this act of his, Miracles and Mercies seem to vie one with another; that the God of Eternity should be born in time; that the Creator of all things should be the Son of a Creature; that the Most Highest should abase himself to the low condition of a Servant; that God should become an Infant, is a miracle of Love, which we can admire and adore, but never fully comprehend. The greatness of God is unsearchable, his excellencies and perfections are incomprehensible; he is infinitely good, powerful, wise and holy. Man, contrariwise, is in himself wicked and weak, and ignorant, impure and miserable; there is so great a disproportion betwixt God and Man, so wide, so immense a distance, that nothing less than an infinite Love could have filled up the

In præsepe jacet, sed mundum continet, ubera fugit, sed Angelos pascit. Aug. Ser. de purific. 2.

Hæc est mensura amoris, non solum quantum fecit nos, quanta fecit pro nobis, sed & quantis-

Gulph

ius factus est pro nobis.

Gulph betwixt those two so different natures, and united them into one Person. 'Twas never seen that a Shepherd would creep upon all four, and cover himself with a Sheep-skin, to call his Flock out of danger, and to expose himself for it; but *the good Shepherd* did much more: When he came *to Lay down his life for his* lost and wandering *Sheep*, and gather them into his Fold: he took on him, not only the likeness, but the very nature of them; he became *the Lamb of God*, that he might be the Shepherd of Mankind. Tho' he was infinitely more above Man, than Men are above Beasts, yet he became *the Son of Man*, that he might become the Saviour of Men. 'Twas never seen that a Sovereign Prince would seek to reduce to loyalty the most abject of his rebellious Subjects, by mixing Blood with them, uniting their Families together; but behold the Supreme Monarch of Heaven and Earth contracts a near affinity with his ungrateful Rebels, who are as vile and miserable as they are criminal, that he may free them from their guilt, and win them to their duty and their happiness. Proud and wretched Sinner! thou wouldst be so far from entring into the kindred of meaner persons, those that are much thine inferi-

ors,

ors, that thou canst hardly endure to be in their company: and behold, the most Glorious and Holy God, thine offended Sovereign, is become thy near relation, is become thy Brother, that he may win thine affections and become thy Saviour.

His life, all along, was a continuation of his great mercy and humility, *he went about doing good*, healing all manner of diseases Corporal and Spiritual, giving excellent Instructions and great Examples of Vertue. But what we now consider, and what should most affect us, is, that for our sakes *he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*, all the time of his abode here below. At his first entrance into the world he was degraded, even below the condition of the meanest Infants, being born in a Stable, and laid in a Manger; eight days after he began *to be numbred among the Transgressors*, receiving the bloody and painful Sacrament of Circumcision, which belonged to Sinners; in his youth he lived in poverty and obscurity, and was subject to his Parents; when he manifested himself to the world, then he perpetually *endured the contradiction of Sinners*; besides, that he lived upon Alms, *becoming poor for us, who was Lord over all*: He wanted even time to eat what the charity of pious persons afforded him, and had not so much as *a place where*

be

he might reſt his head. He was tempted of Satan, *that he might ſuccour thoſe that are tempted*; he often watcht whole Nights to Prayer, and was often faint with tireſom journeys, and hunger, and thirſt: and what is yet worſe, he was daily perſecuted by ingrateful Men, for whom he endured all this. They ſlandered him with falſe imputations of being a Glutton and a Winebibber; his kind and charitable affability in converſing with noted Sinners, was made matter of accuſation, as if he had conſented to their evil deeds; his Divine Doctrine was derided, as if proceeding from madneſs; the Miracles which he wrought in their behalf, were ſaid to be done by Sorcery, and packt with *Beelzebub*: and to all theſe diſgraces and contumelies they would often have added violence, and ſtoned him to death had he not eſcaped out of their hands by a haſty flight.

Lord, thou hadſt compaſſion on the Multitudes becauſe they had followed *thee three days, and had nothing to eat*, Mat. 15. 32. and thou livedſt above three and thirty years, waiting upon thy baſe and fugitive Servants, who were become thine Enemies, ſeeking to prevent their ruine, by the aſſiduity of thy care and kindneſs! O ſad Ingratitude, that we ſhould be ſo ſoon weary in ſerving thee, wert ſo patient and indefa-

defatigable in acting and suffering for us, for our happiness and our salvation.

CHAP. VII.

A consideration of the Cross in its four dimensions.

But if we desire *to be rooted and grounded in love*, Eph. 3. 17. and to comprehend with all Saints the immense Charity of the Son of God, *which passeth knowledge*, which infinitely exceedeth all Learning in profitableness and excellency; then measure the Love of Christ by the dimensions of his Cross, the breadth and the length the depth and height thereof, for therein love appears in its extent, so that nothing can be added to it. That the eternal Son of God would become our Brother, by becoming Man, and would live in poverty and Contempt, was very much; but that afterwards he would die for us, in that manner as he did, is the greatest wonder that ever the World saw. And indeed, there hapned more Prodigies when he died, than at all other times of his humiliation; the Sun hid himself, darkness overspread the whole World, the Earth shook, the Stones and Rocks were rent, the Graves were opened,

opened, and the Vail of the Temple was divided in twain; Nature seemed to be amazed to see her God suffer and die upon a Cross: *Greater love, hath no man than this that a Man lay down his life for his friend;* 'Tis true man cannot possibly do more: But the Blessed Jesus did much more; he was God then he became Man that he might die for his Enemies. This is it, whereof *S. Paul* speaks, when he saith it was never conceived or seen, how great are the things which God hath prepared for them that love him: *We speak* (saith he) *the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which none of the Princes of this world knew, for had they known it they would never have crucified the Lord of Glory: but as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither is it entred into the heart of Man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit.* It appears, that he speaks (not of the bliss of Heaven, but) of the crucifixion of our Blessed Saviour, which to the Jews was a stumbling Block, and to the Gentiles foolishness, and which neither the Senses nor the Reason of Man could ever comprehend; but as hidden Mystery was made known to Christians, by the revelations of the All-knowing Spirit of God. To understand therefore as much as may be, this never fully

fully understood and never enough admired Love of our Redeemer, in dying for us, let us in the first place view the Breadth of his Cross, that is, the variety of the Torments he endured for us, in the last Stage of his uneasie Pilgrimage.

CHAP. VIII.

The Breadth of the Cross, or the manifold Sufferings of Christ for our Redemption.

WE may begin with the manner of his Apprehension; he was taken as if he had been a publick Enemy to Mankind, a Thief or a Murtherer, with Swords and Staves, with rudeness and violence; he was betrayed by one of his Disciples, forsaken by the rest, and then bound and drag'd from place to place by those he had instructed and fed, and in whose behalf he had wrought Miracles. He was called an impious Blasphemer, and voted guilty of death, for confessing a great and necessary Truth, that he was the only Son of God. Afterwards he was exposed a whole Night to the Indignities and Mockeries of his insulting Enemies; they spet upon his sweet and glorious Face; they vailed him, and smote his Head and buffeted him; and,

as if he had been a contemptible Ideot to be made sport withal, they bade him prophesie, ghess who gave him the blows. He was accused before the *Roman Prætor*, as being a lewd Malefactor, a rebellious Traytor, who *subverted the People, and forbade to pay Tribute to* Cæsar. From thence he was sent to King *Herod*, where he was set at nought, and abused by him and his Souldiers, and then sent back with scorn and contempt to *Pilate*. Afterwards *Barabbas*, a seditious Murtherer, was preferred to him, and a loud clamor raised by the People, that he might be crucified and put to death. Then was he whip'd before their eyes, tied to a Post like a vile Slave, and exposed to the servile Rods, whiles they *ploughed furrows upon his back*, as the Prophet spake; the Souldiers took him, platted a Crown of Thorns and prest it on his Head till the Blood run of all sides of him; they beat him with Canes and Clubs, and put a Reed instead of a Scepter in his hand; and when he was all over Spittle and Blood they brought out their Mock-King, and *Pilate* presented him to the People, and said, *Behold the Man*, thinking to move them to pity by so sad a spectacle; but nothing less than his death would satisfie their enraged Cruelty: therefore he was condemned, and then abused afresh by the Souldiers, and loaded with his

his Cross, and driven out of the City to Mount *Golgotha*. Now here begins a new scene of Sorrows; the afflicted *Son of Man* having lost much Blood, and suffered so much; having been rudely haled from the Garden to *Annas*, from *Annas* to *Caiphas*, from *Caiphas* to *Pilate*, from *Pilate* to *Herod*, from *Herod* to *Pilate* again, and from thence to the place of his Execution, arrives at last, faint and weary, and sorrowful upon Mount *Calvary*, where he was to die; here his Hands and Feet (which are most sensible parts of our Bodies, by being most full of Nerves) were pierced through and nailed to the Cross; and though there was a seat where to rest his Body, as the Ancients say, yet the Cross being lift up, and put into the hollowness of the ground to make it stand upright, his wounded Body was shaken and affected, doubtless with a most acute pain. He was exposed naked, not only to the view of the multitudes, but also to the open air, which was extremely cold, in that the Sun was hid; he was burnt inwardly with an excessive heat and driness, being tired with so many Journeys; and being exhausted of spirits and moisture, by his sorrows and bleeding, insomuch that he complained of this above all his other Sufferings, crying out, *I thirst*, (though we may say,

that he thirsted most our happiness, that he thirsted to drink out the dregs of his bitter Cup, that we might drink the *Cup of Salvation*) He wanted the use of his Hands and Feet, being tied to suffer, so that he could not so much as stir, nor wipe the Blood off his Face, he was afflicted with the sight of his afflicted Mother, who from her wounded Soul reflected sorrow upon her dying Son and Saviour. His Soul was also, as it were crucified, by the sense of the Divine Anger against the Sins of Men, for the which he was making expiation, insomuch that he complained, that God had forsaken him. And lastly, his Heart-strings were broke, and his Body deprived of life, by a most violent and bitter death. And now, who shall not love Jesus? and who shall not admire that Love which is expresst in the breadth of the Cross? Lord how exceeding broad was thy Cross, which contained so many sorts of Torments! Nothing can be compared to it, but thy Charity which made thee take it up, that we might be charged with nothing, but a pleasant and *easie Yoke*! But, Lord, why do we, most vile and sinful Creatures, refuse to bear thy *light burthen*, when thou the Most Holy and Most Highest hast born for us so sad and intolerable a load?

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

The Length of the Cross.

WE are now to measure the Length of the Cross, that is, the time of Christs bitter Passion, the tedious duration of his Sufferings, which began with his Birth, and continued to his last breath. The life of Jesus, as we have seen, was as it were, a Chain of Miseries, every link, every connection, had something grievous and afflictive, *He was a man of Sorrows*; therefore we no where read that ever he laughs, or enjoy'd the pleasures and the mirth of this World: but that he suffered much and wept several times is recorded by the Evangelists. Every day was, in some manner, the day of his Crucifixion (which to us is *Good*, but to him was sad *Friday*:) for he knowing all along what he was to suffer, and living in expectation of that cruel death; we may say, that his Fears did, in some manner, prevent his Murtherers, and by anticipation, acted upon him, while he lived, what they were to inflict on him to put him to death; for he was pleased to assume, together with our Nature, our innocent Passions and Infirmities. *I have a Baptism* (saith he) *to be baptized with,*

and how am I constrained until it be accomplished! that was the Baptism of his Blood, which he wish'd for, because of his love to Mankind, his great desire of paying our Ransomes? but feared, because of the repugnance of his human Nature, to such bitter sufferings; wherefore (saith he) *Cuncxomai*, I am constrained, I am in a streight betwixt two, I wish and yet I fear to die. But that which we most properly call his Passion, because it exceeded the rest of his Sufferings, lasted eighteen hours, without intermission, nine of *Thursday* night, and nine of *Friday*; from the time of his Agony in the Garden about nine at Night while three in the Afternoon of the day following; all which time he suffered those several sorts of pains and tortures which are already mentioned; all that time he drank full draughts of that bitter Cup, the fear whereof made him sweat drops of Blood, when he began to taste of it; all that time he suffered what no Tongue can express, but what all Hearts should endeavour to feel and to think of daily. Lord Jesu, thou wert tormented a long time, that we might not be tormented to all Eternity; grant that we may endure any thing for thee, and from thee our God, who didst endure so much for Men, and from Men.

CHAP. X.

The Depth of the Cross.

WE have seen that Bar of the Cross, on which the Hands of our Blessed Saviour were nailed, *the breadth* and *the length*, that is, the variety and the tediousness of the pains and sufferings he underwent for us: Now we are to consider the biggest piece which stood upright, whereon his Body rested and his Feet were nailed; *the depth and the height*, that is, the pureness and the greatness of his sorrows. If we read with attention the Passion of Christ in the four Gospels, we shall see our Blessed Redeemer, as it were, sunk into a deep abyss of misery, by the heavy burthen of our sins; he might well cry by his Prophet, *See whether there is any sorrow like unto my sorrow?* for the greatest of humane afflictions admit of many comforts, whereas he was deprived of all; as there was no part in us but was infected with Sin, there was none in him but was affected with pain; he was all over stripes and sores, an universal wound within and without; he suffered in all his capacities, in his outward and inward senses, in all the parts and faculties of his Soul and Body;

the very circumstances of his Passion did all concur to make it more bitter and afflictive. He was deprived of that ordinary comfort of being assisted by his Friends, all the Disciples forsook him and fled; as the Prophet had foretold of him, *I have trodden the Wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me, I looked and there was none to help, I wondred that there was none to uphold*, Isai. 63. He was like a mild and defenceless Lamb in the midst of ravenous Wolves; there were none about him, but such as thirsted for his Blood. And no wonder if Man forsook him, when he was in some manner forsaken even by his Father. It pleased God to give him up to the Cruelties of wicked Men, and the sorrows of death; and that his divine Nature, (though personally and inseperably united to his humanity) should for a time suspend the effects of its beatifying union, and leave him, suffer as a Man in Soul and Body, the greatest pains without the least comforts. They that saw our crucified Saviour suffer so patiently, as not to open his mouth to complain, might have thought that he had no sense of pain; therefore he cries out so bitterly, *my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Why dost thou suffer me to be plunged into this gulph of Sorrow, so that I have nothing

but anguish within and without? Why dost thou suffer me to be almost overwhelmed by so great a distress, *and art so far from helping me, and from the words of my complaint?* Psal. 22. Lord, we had deserved to sink, and evermore to cry and groan in the bottomless Pit; and to rescue us, thou art pleased to descend very low; and *with strong crying and tears*, to say, *De profundis clamavi, out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord, hear my voice*, Psal. 130. Be pleased to hear us, dearest Lord, when we call upon thee, and make thy voice sink into our hearts, and there find a chearful admission, and a constant and sincere Obedience.

CHAP. XI.

The Height of the Cross.

NOw we have only the Height of the Cross to look on, that is, the sublimity, the greatness of the torments of Christs Crucifixion; that in this sense his Cross was very high, appears already by what hath been said; and yet we may consider further, that he being conceived by the Holy Ghost of a most pure Virgin, was therefore of a most healthful constitution; so that his senses being very quick and

and apprehensive, were sensible of pain beyond other Mens; and so all the blows and wounds he received, and his being nailed and stretched three long hours on the Cross, as upon the Rack, must needs have been a most exquisite torture. Also, the vigor of his Nature, being neither weakned nor spent by age or distempers, he being full of strength and in the flower of his age, was capable to taste the smart and sharpness of his Pain, to the very last moment of his life; and so 'tis written by S. *Luke*, *That he cried with a loud voice when he gave up the ghost*, to shew that he was still very strong, and that his death was bitter and violent to extremity. There was likewise an invisible Cross, which afflicted his Soul, and made it sorrowful even unto death, *his heart was like wax, melted in the midst of his bowels*, Psal. 22. and in the midst of so many and such intolerable pains, his Murtherers shook their Heads, made Mouths at him, scoft at his sorrows by cruel and insulting Mockeries, and by their Tongues and Derisions aggravated those sufferings, which their hands could hardly increase; but that the Cross of Christ was higher in the greatness of its pains than that of any Martyr, of any Man that ever suffered, is evident enough only by considering who it was that was crucified

fied on it; for it was more that Jesus, being perfect God as well as Man, should shed one drop of Blood, than that all Men and Angels should for Millions of years bear the greatest Torments. Lord, we were wonderfully made by thy power, but we are yet more wonderfully redeemed by thy mercy! Lord, what is Man, that thou shouldst thus be mindful of him! or rather, what is Man, that he is unmindful of thee!

CHAP. XII.

What an infinite Love is expresst by the Cross.

NOw we have seen the whole Frame of the Cross, writ all over in Blood with Characters of Love, expressions of the greatest kindness, for a testimony that JESUS loved us unto death. Not any sorrow or anguish in his Soul, not any gap or wound in his Body, but are as many Mouths to cry aloud in the ears of all men; Behold what manner of Love God had for his Enemies, his sinful and unworthy Creatures, to suffer such things, to die in such a manner, for to redeem them and make them happy. Now, let

O dilectio, quam magnum est vinculum quo ligari potuit Deus!

let us, if we can, comprehend the breadth and the length, the height and the depth of the Love of JESUS, that Love which bound him much harder than the Cords of the Jews, and nailed him to his Cross much faster than those Irons which pierced his Hands and Feet; for he that could with one word cast his Enemies to the ground, could easily have broke their bands and escaped from them, but that his Love did constrain him, and make him desirous and willing thus to dye. What man would suffer one half of what Christ did, for his dearest Benefactor? And then, how immense and wonderfull was that Charity which he expresst in suffering the ignominy and pains of the Cross? for those that were his Enemies and had highly injured him, and from whom he could expect no reward, but only to be loved again! Let us therefore remember it throughout this whole Book, or rather throughout our whole Life, that we have been redeemed from Eternal despair and misery, and from our vain and sinfull conversation, not by *any corruptible thing, as silver and gold, but by the precious Blood of Christ*, shed with great pain and great ignominy.

Chap.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the Eternal Happiness merited for us by the Cross of Christ, and measured by it.

THis Love of *JESUS* is more already by far, than ours can answer: Could our hearts burn perpetually with those brightest flames of Love which beatifie the Cherubims, could they contain all the most passionate affections of all Saints, both in Heaven and Earth, yet we could not love *JESUS* so much as he deserves, for having died to save us from eternal death: And yet he did more; he suffered death that we might have life, that we might have Eternal life; not only that we might not be intirely miserable, but also that we might be perfectly happy. Heaven is the purchase of the Blood of Christ, as well as redemption from Hell; *God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, when we were dead in trespasses and sins, hath quickned us together with Christ, and hath raised us up, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*, Ephes. 2. 5. Let us meditate a while upon that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, reserved in Heaven for us*, 2 Cor. 4. 17. and in it consider the same dimensions, as in the price where-

wherewith it was bought, the Cross of our Saviour, and it will greatly press and increase our obligations to love him.

It is κατ' ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν αἰώνιον βάρος δόξης, as S. *Paul* calls it; each word is a part of its dimension. First, the Breadth; It comprehends all joys and pleasures, all things that are good and desirable, all that can yeild satisfaction, and create happiness to a man; even that incomprehensible and increated Goodness, which is the inexhaustible Fountain of perfect Bliss and Felicity; *in whose presence there is fulness of joy, at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore.* Secondly, its Height: It is above the Regions of the Air, in the highest Heavens; the sublimity and greatness of its glory is expresst, by being like the Angels of God; by shining forth as the Sun, by a Kingdom, a Crown incorruptible, a Crown of life, and sitting with the Son of God in his Throne. Thirdly, Its Depth: It is pure and unmingled, it admits of nothing afflictive; neither death nor sorrow, neither hunger nor thirst, neither pain nor anguish; *all tears are wiped from their eyes.* There is the absence of all evil, and the presence of all good; therefore 'tis call'd *the Joy of our Lord*, than which nothing can express a greater; for God is intirely and perfectly happy, and so incapable of any sorrow, that the least sight of the

Beatifical Vision would turn Hell it self into Paradice. Fourthly and lastly, Its Length, its never ceasing duration: It admits of no end or Period, it is Everlasting, it is Eternal, it is for ever and ever; after as many Millions of years as there is drops of water in the Sea, it will but begin; and after as many thousands of Millions more, it will be no nearer ending than it was at first, still Eternal, and ever Eternal. This is that Bliss which we had forfeited by Sin, and are reintituled to by the Passion of Christ; that Bliss which if often and duly considered, would make us despise the World, long for Heaven, love affectionately, and serve diligently that *Jesus* who offers it to us, and died to purchase it. Wherefore S. *Paul* prays so earnestly for the *Ephesians*, *That God would give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, the eyes of their understanding enlightned, that they might know what is the hope of his calling; and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the Saints*, Ephes. 1. 18.

That we might once be possessed of this Bliss as well as delivered from Hell, was the cause why *Jesus* descended down from Heaven, became poor, took on him the form of a Servant, and humbled himself unto death, even the death of the Cross; *for the joy that was set before him, he despised the shame and endured the Cross*, saith S. *Paul* Heb. 12. 2.

That

That *joy*, we may say, was not the enjoyment of heavenly Bliss, for himself; 'twas his without suffering; there was no need he should bear the Cross for to obtain it, he had a sure Title to it by Nature: *the joy* therefore *that was set before him* was the joy of saving us, the joy of rescuing us from the jaws of Death, the gulph of eternal Perdition; the joy of paying the price for our Redemption; the joy of making us capable of eternal Joys; the joy of purchasing the glory and felicities of Heaven for us, in a word, the joy of shewing us his love, and expecting the returns of ours. This was *the joy*, why, *he despised the shame*, because his shame should raise us to glory; this was *the joy*, why, *he endured the Cross*, because his Cross should exalt us to a happy and honourable Throne.

This Meditation of the great and Manifold benefits of God, and the wonderful love and charity he hath shewed us in Jesus, we may and should prosecute much farther, in all instances, for 'tis infinite, and never enough to be considered and admired. But, Reader, if that little, I have here set down doth not affect thee, and if being affected with it, thou dost not resolve to return to God all possible acknowledgments and

and demonstrations of a grateful Love, then read no further; for, as what preceds is matter of Mercy from Gods part, so what follows is matter of duty on mine. I shall now infer that we must love God; *because he first loved us*; and that if the love of *Jesus* to us, hath made him bear our Cross, our love to him must make us bear his yoke: If he died for us because he loved us, then we must live to him, to make it appear that we love him, *for this is love*, saith S. *John*, *that we keep his Commandments*, 1 John 5. 3. By our hearty obedience we are to declare, that we are sensible of his love, and desirous to requite it. This trial of our affections he himself doth require; *If ye keep my Commandments, ye shall abide in my love, and ye shall be my Friends if ye do whatsoever I have commanded you*, John. 15. 10.

Haec via amoris est vera non ficta: via cordialis, non verbalis: via fructuosa, non otiosa: via non solum sermonis, sed etiam operis. Idiot.

Chap.

CHAP. XIV.

That the Mercies of our Redemption challenge our love and hearty obedience.

NOw then we are to consider, that God giving knowledg of salvation to Men, hath also thereby proclaimed their duty: Manifesting his Love, he hath engaged and required theirs; as our being called to be Christians makes a great and real change, as to the happiness of our condition; a great and real change it ought also to make, as to the holiness of our conversation. Therefore St. *Paul* calls the Gospel, *The power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth*, Rom. 1. 16. and he prays for the *Ephesians*, that they *might know the love of Christ, that so they might be filled with all the fulness of God*, Ephes. 3. 18. as to say, that the knowledg of the Love of Christ is exceeding powerful and efficacious, and would replenish them with all graces and vertues; for this cause he sets so high a value upon *the excellency of this knowledg, esteeming all the world but dung in comparison of it*, Phil. 3. 8. and he exhorting the *Cretians to be ready to every good work*, puts them in mind that they, who were once *disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts*, had been delivered from that unhappy condition *by the appearance of the love of God our Saviour towards Man*, Tit.

3. as in other places, he exhorteth Christians, *to walk worthy of their calling*; *worthy of the Gospel*; thereby declaring that the manifestation of the Divine Love, in the Preaching of the Gospel, was the promulgation, as of their happiness, so of their duty; whereby they were rescued, as well from living as from perishing in their sins. 'Tis *the appearance of that grace of God which bringeth salvation*, Tit. 2. 11. that teacheth Men to live *soberly, righteously and godly:* and 'tis the receiving and crediting that Heavenly Doctrin, that *quencheth the fiery darts of Satan, that purifies the heart, and overcomes the World*; so that the bare belief of the truth of the New Testament is a strong and indispensable obligation to a chearful, universal and persevering obedience to all its precepts; the very profession of being Christians doth strictly bind us to the performance of all Christian duties. But the necessity of a holy Faith and a holy Life hath been so fully evinced and asserted, and *all things that pertain to life and godliness*, so clearly and learnedly explained by Catholic Writers Ancient and Modern, especially many pious Fathers and Sons of this Church since the Reformation, that I need, nor can add nothing to their learned labors. We want Charity, not knowledg; therefore now I turn my self,

self, as my design is, to draw Inferences from known and granted premisses, to move the affections and affect the heart; and by various arts and meditations, to kindle and nourish in our Breasts the fire of a divine Love.

CHAP. XV.

An invitation to enter the Cloister of Love.

I Ask therefore; Hast thou conceived a fair Idea of Christianity? hast thou observed the glory and greatness of its Mysteries, the holiness of its Doctrin; and the perfection of its Precepts and Counsels? hast thou considered and admired the great exemplar of all Vertues, the Holy *Jesus*, Author of this Holy Institution? Hast thou read his Life with an observing eye; and hast thou viewed the fair Copies of this perfect Original, which have been drawn by many of his Saints, in the imitation of his Example? Hast thou weighed the excellency of his Promises, the great Immunities, and the invaluable Advantages which belong to his Followers? Hast thou seriously pondered the great obligations which the Love of *Jesus* hath laid upon thee? and

art thou desirous to be happy by loving again, and being grateful? if so, enter this Cloister of Love. Love *Jesus*, and thou shalt reign with him.

The Cloister I mean is not the precinct of a particular *Abbey*, or the confinement of a narrow Cell; but as to the place, it is the Catholick Church, whose inclosure is large enough to entertain all the *Religions* in the World, all that are of the Christian Order: And the Rule I would have thee follow, is not that of any Founders, nor even that of *Pachomius*, said to have been brought down by Angels; but that which the Son of God himself delivered, the Gospel Rule, the Christian Laws, which were bound upon us by him that is our Lord and our Judge, and to whom gratitude, duty and interest obligeth us all to be obedient. *Hath not God given his Beloved Son the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession?* Psal. 2. "Why then (saith "*Erasmus*,) should we "confine the excellency and perfection of Christianity to particular places? Why should "we make that short "and narrow, which

Cur sic arctamus Christi professionem, quam ille latissime voluit patere? & ego certe sic optarim Evangelicam Religionem sic omnibus esse cordi, &c. Ench.

"Christ

"Christ would have to be of an univer-
"sal extent? if it be words we affect, is
"not a City a great Monastery, the Ab-
"bot whereof is the Bishop, set over it
"by Christ? Would to God the Chri-
"stian Rule were so well beloved and
"observed, that no Man might seek or
"desire the *Benedictin* or *Franciscan*: I say so too, all this is true and to be wished; yet the universal comprehends many particular Churches, and the Christian Rule hath also many several interpretations. Therefore to be plain and positive, the Church of *England*, (as the purest part or Member of the Catholick, which hath repurged corrupt Innovations, maintaining still a due conformity with Antiquity) is that which I recommend to thee above all others: And for the best interpretation of the Sacred Canon, the Doctrin and Worship of this Church is that which I would have thee prefer to all the rest.

Chap.

CHAP. XVI.

The Vow to be taken at the entrance of Loves Monastery.

BUT (because I speak not to Dissenters, nor intend to dispute with them) thou wilt say, that thou hast entred this Cloister already, and hast undertaken its Rule; and so far 'tis well. But there is this difference betwixt what thou hast already done in this matter, and what now I wish thee to do; that thou didst not come of thy self, but wert brought into this Society; that it was by Proxy thou promisedst to observe the orders of it, and that what was done at that time is never to be repeated. Whereas now, by an after election, by free and considerate acts of thine own will, I would have thee often renew thy holy Vows and Protestations, and to do it with a great sense of love and gratitude. Ratifie then thy former engagements by being confirmed, if thou art not; and if thou art, by a hearty and sincere endeavour to perform thy Vows and Promises, which are as follows. First, *To renounce the Devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, with all co-*

vetous

vetous desires of the same, and the sinful lusts of the flesh. Secondly, *To believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith.* And, Thirdly, *To keep Gods Holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of thy life.*

This Vow contains all thy duty, the highest pitch of Christian perfection, Rules for the most Regular and Spiritual Life; let thy serious application, and earnest endeavour to observe it, discriminate and sever thee from the profane and less Religious World. Thou needest no distinct Incloſure, no distinct Habits, no distinct Patrons or Offices; thy sincere study, thy Religious care to discharge this obligation, will sufficiently Cloister thee in from the looser society and conversation of Men, and will make a difference great enough betwixt thee and them.

Quod summum est, id omnibus est exitendum, ut saltem mediocria assequamur, nec est quod ullum vitæ genus ab hoc scopo submoveamus, &c. Eras.

In vestimentis non est contritio mentis;

Ni mens sit pura, nil confert regula dura.

But tho' thou dost remain in the Civil Society of the World, and the Neighbourhood

bourhood of thy Neighbour: yet various are the ways that lead through the World to Heaven, and here I undertake to teach thee a ſure and ſhort one, through which all glorified Saints have paſt. Some Perſons here are eminent in one vertue, ſome in another; ſome are guided by hope, and ſome by fear. Many and different are the conſiderations and helps whereby Men are brought to make themſelves happy in doing their duty; but the Motive, the Guide, the Way, the Inſtrument I recommend to thee above all others, is Love. Love is the ſtrongeſt Motive, the ſureſt Guide, the ſafeſt Way, the beſt Inſtrument in the World; to live well, to keep thee from wandring, to bring thee to Heaven, to conquer all oppoſitions, and do the work of God throughly. Love is by far the beſt Monaſtery; it will both ſecure thee from the World, and yet enable thee to do much good in it. Love hath a gene-

In Cœlo videbimus & amabimus, hic amandum ut videamus.

Dilectio eſt via rectiſſima abſque devio: via brevis abſque tædio: via plana abſque tumulo: via clara abſque nubilo: via ſecura abſque periculo, &c. Idiot. Cont.

ral intendance over all vertues and duties, and makes them pleasant to us, and acceptable to God. *Love is the fulfilling of the Law.* Love, and thou canst never do amiss; love, and thou canst never miscarry.

CHAP. XVII.

Considerations of the nature of Love, and first of Self-Love.

LOve is the common Prince and Parent of other Passions, as they all take their Laws, so they take their Origin from it: Or, to speak more properly, Love it self is all passions, and it obtains several different names, according to its several acts and objects. "Love "(saith St. *Augustine*) "is called Desire, "when it gasps after "its beloved object; "when 'tis possest of "it, it takes another "denomination, and "is called joy or plea-"sure; when it flies "from what it ab-"hors, it hath the "name

Amor inhians habere quod amatur, cupiditas est, idem habens eoque fruens, lætitia est, fugiens quod ei adversatur, timor est, idque cum acciderit sentiens, tristitia est. Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. 14. c. 7.

name of Fear; and 'tis called Sorrow, when what it feared overtakes it. But still Love is the only Passion: Desire, Anger, Joy and Sorrow; Hope and Fear are either the motions or acts, or else the accidents of it. This clearly shews the great power and activity of this noble Passion; for 'tis well known that the greatest, and indeed all humane actions that are free, proceed from these natural affections, and so are the effects of Love. There is no need, to distinguish the several sorts thereof, declaring that Love is either natural or supernatural, sensual or spiritual, of friendship or interest; for all these are the same faculty, or passion in Man, differing in their Principles or Objects only: neither would it much avail to give and explain accurate and studied definitions of Love, which is much better felt than exprest, and much better declared by actions than words; it will be more useful to consider, that as Love is the principle of all Passions, so it is of all vertues and vices. This Fountain sendeth forth the clearest and the foulest streams; and like all other things, the greater its excellency, the worse is its abuse: so that it should be our greatest care to use it well, and set it upon the right object.

No joy in enjoyment without Love, without it no pleasure in fruition, it is the great instrument of happiness, if we place it aright, and it brings the greatest infelicities if we misplace it. 'Tis a misguided Love that makes Men vicious, that causeth all the disorders in the World; because Men love themselves more than God, and so would be Gods to themselves, the Authors of their own happiness, expecting their greatest felicities, either from their Bodies, as the sensual *Epicures*, or from their Minds, as the proud *Stoics*. Hence it is, that in the head of a long Catalogue of the blackest Sins, St. *Paul* sets Self-Love as the cause and origine of all the rest: saying, that in *the worst and most perilous times, Men should be lovers of their own selves*, 2 Tim. 3. 2, 4. and again, that they should be *lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God*; which, being the greatest depravation of the understanding and of the will of Men, plungeth them into the greatest sins, and thence into the greatest miseries. Certain it is that Piety or true Goodness consisteth in willingly submitting ones self to the Divine Pleasure, either to suffer or obey; and certain it is, that Self-Love will admit of neither, it makes a Man uncapable of Religion, the Essence where-

of

of is to deny our own to comply with God's Will; and so instead of that *Godliness*, *Justice*, and *Sobriety*, which are the three Generals, comprehensive of all Religious duties, this muddy Head-spring *Self-love* sends forth three muddy Streams, which cause *the overflowing of ungodliness*, and almost drown the World under a deluge of wickedness. These be the love of Sensual Pleasures, called Voluptuousness; the love of Riches, called Covetousness; and the vain-glorious love of Honour, called Pride or Ambition. These three are disclaimed and renounced by all Christians in the first part of their Baptismal Vow; for the love of them confounds the World and all Religion, makes Men criminal in Souls, Bodies, and Estates, and is the great Enemy to their rest and salvation. Therefore St. *John* who calls these *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*, gives us this necessary Caution; *love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*, 1 John 2. 15. that is, as our Blessed Saviour saith, *No man can serve two Masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other; ye cannot serve God and Mammon*, Mat. 6. 24. There is

no *halting betwixt God and Baal*, the one or the other must be acknowledged for Lord; there cannot be two contrary Sovereigns together, and the same thing cannot be granted to two several Competitors; if we love the World, it reigns in our hearts, and God is excluded; if we give our love to the World, we cannot possibly give it to God also; so then the love of our selves is Concupiscence, the Mother of all Sin and Impurity, and the Love of God is Grace or Charity, the Fountain of all Holiness and Vertue: and these two, according as they are predominant in men, make here the distinction betwixt the penitent and the impenitent, betwixt the just and the unjust: and will make the great difference hereafter, betwixt those that shall dwell in the embraces of the God of Love to eternity, and those that shall *dwell with everlasting burnings*; for every man is what he loves, (as St. *Augustine* saith)

Amor motus est cordis qui cum se inordinate movet, cupiditas dicitur: cum vero ordinatus est, charitas appellatur. Aug. de Subst. dil. c. 1.

Talis est quisque, qualis est dilectio ejus, terram diligis, The irresistable power of that Passion, doth in some manner transform him into that which

which his love embra- terra es, &c. Aug.
ceth: And therefore Tract. 2. in 1 Joh.
to know whether a man be good or bad, we enquire not what he knows or what he believes, but what he doth love; being sure that his Morals are of the same nature as his Love; because his desires and actions are all guided by it.

CHAP. XVIII.

That the love of Jesus requires we should mortifie Self-Love.

THis makes it our greatest duty, as it is our greatest interest to rule by Reason and Religion, that Passion which certainly will rule over us, to set our love upon the right object, upon God, not upon our selves. Not that we should or can be our own enemies, and seek our own ruin; *No man ever yet hated his own flesh*, saith St *Paul*, Ephes. 29. the worst enemies to Mankind are kind to themselves; and we may as soon lose our being, as the desire of our well-being.

But we must understand, that our supreme happiness consisteth in the enjoyment of God, who is that infinite increated Goodness, that can alone fully beatifie us. God

is infinitely happy, and hath the possession of his infinite perfections by loving himself, & we also become happy by loving him with all our hearts and souls; it was so in the state of innocency, and so it is still and ever shall be, and Angels and Men became miserable only by departing from the Love of God, which was then as 'tis now to be expreſt by obedience. So that when man prefers any thing to God, he not only departs from his duty, but also from his Sovereign Bliss.

In the time of mans Integrity, God was to be regarded and loved first and most of all; so it must be still: The difference is that then Man did it naturally, and now by a supernatural assistance; he did it then by the grace of his Original Righteousness, and now by the grace of the Gospel; he did it then without reluctancy, now he hath sinful appetites and passions which he must deny and mortifie before he can do it. Therefore our Blessed Saviour requires it at the very entrance of his School, as a necessary qualification to all that willbe his Disciples, that they should deny themselves, and hate all things in comparison of him. *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his Cross daily and follow me.* And again, *if any man come to me, and hate not his Father and Mother, and Wife and Children, and Brothers*

thers and Sisters, and his own life also, he cannot be my Disciple, Luk. 9. 23. 14. 26. that is, he that will own *Jesus*, and be owned by him, must in all things give him the pre-eminence; must relinquish his natural desires, deny his own will, that he may yeild an humble obedience to God; he must forsake all things that come in competition with him; and even part with his deareſt Relations and his own Life, (as though he hated them) rather than commit what God hath forbidden, or disclaim what he would have us profess; this Self-abnegation, this daily Self-crucifixion is no act of Self-hatred as the World might think; but the greateſt kindness we can shew to our selves or others: for 'tis only the way whereby to make our lives comfortable here, and eternally happy in the world to come; and in many cases more hard and less advantagious we practise Self-denial, of our free choice. As he therefore that cuts off one of his Limbs, hates not himself, but seeks the preservation of his Body; and he that casts his goods over-board, hates them not, but prefers his safety to them; so in this case, he that parts with his Earthly enjoyments hates them not, but prefers Heaven to this Earth; he that loseth this present life hates

Ille satis se diligit qui sedulò agit, ut summo fruatur bono

it not, but loves Eternal life beyond it; and he that forsakes his Friends or Parents to follow his Saviour in the discharge of a good Conscience hates them not, but seeks to win them to their happiness, by preferring his God and his Salvation to their unjust desires. In this case the Promise is verified, that he that parts with any thing for Christs sake, receives an hundred fold in compensation; and he that loseth his life, certainly finds it; therefore hating our kindred and our own lives, is otherwise expresst in S. *Matthew*; *He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me*, &c. Mat. 10. 37. As much as to say, that it is only required, that the Love of God should be predominant; that *Jesus* should be dearer to us than all persons whatever; and that in the first place, we should love God with all our minds, with all our strength, and with all our souls; for then afterwards the love of our selves and others being subordinate, would become regular and innocent.

Recte novit vivere, qui recte novit amare. Aug.

Chap.

CHAP. XIX.

How great a Vertue is Divine Charity, or the Love of God.

NOw as all Sins and Miseries proceed from a mis-placed Love; so all Vertues and Felicities are the product of Love well guided, and placed on the right object; this is as beneficial and advantagious, as the other is pernicious: that is, (as S. *Augustine* saith) that as Self-Love is the root of all evil, so the Love of God is the root of all good, the Rock whence all Vertues do grow. The excellency of Divine Love is so great, so transcendent, that it alone is accepted on its own account, and all other things for its sake; a Faith strong enough to work Miracles, Alms the most expensive, and even the flames of Martyrdom profit nothing without Love, as S. *Paul* teacheth; Love it is that makes all good works meritorious in the best sense; Love it is that gives

Sicut radix omnium malorum est cupiditas: ita radix omnium bonarum est charitas. Serm. de Charit.

Sine charitate fides potest esse, sed non prodesse. Aug. 1 Cor. 13.

gives a value to all other virtues; or rather it is Love that produceth all good works and virtues, as they are ſo indeed. Love is the diſcharge of our whole duty, *the fulfilling of the Law*, ſaith S. *Paul*, Rom. 13. 10. Love is that grace which renews and ſanctifies our natures and *abides for ever*; it is the greateſt, the moſt excellent gift of God; it is even the Divine Spirit, who unites all things within the bonds of Love and Unity, ſaith S. *Auguſtine*, and with whom all good things are ever given. Divines teach, that the Holy Ghoſt proceeds from the Father and the Son by way of Love; wherefore he is called, *nexus amoris quo conjungitur Pater cum Filio, & Filius cum Patre*; that is, in the Language of the Church, that in the Unity of the ſame Spirit, the Father and the Son live and reign evermore; or, as S. *Auguſtine* expreſſeth it, The love wherewith the Father and the Son love mutually is the Holy Spirit, and repreſents beſt the

Unitas Spiritus continet omnia. Serm. Pent.

Donum eſt Sp. Sanctus in quo nobis omnia bona dantur.

Charitas que Pater diligit Filium & Filius Patrem, que eſt Sp. Sanctus, in effabilem communionem amorum demonſtrat. De Trin. l. 15.

the Mystery of their Incomprehensible Union.

Now that Divine Spirit, which is the eternal Love of God to himself, is given to us in the Grace of Love or Charity (which are one and the same) whereby we are all joyned together into one Body, and all united to God; therefore in our holding Communion with the Church, we are commanded to keep *the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace*, Ephes. 4. 3. and we are taught, that *the Love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us*, Rom. 5. 5. and, that *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost are all one*, 2 Cor. 13. 14. so that to come to the highest pitch, and finish the *Elogium* of Love, we may say with S. *John*, that *God is Love*, and then we have said all. *God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him*, 1 John 4. 16. that is, God is an abyss of Love and Goodness; by love he gives himself to us, and by love we give up our selves to him, and are transformed into him. Wonder not therefore, if the effects of Love are so glorious and wonderful, when it proceeds im-

Deus charitas est; brevis lata, sed magna lata: brevis in sermone & magna in intellectu, &c.

Aug. Tract. 9. in Ep. Johan.

immediately from God, and is the communication of himself to us; when it is the grace of Jesus Christ, and the most precious gift of the Divine Spirit; when it is the Sanctification of our Natures, and the bettering and perfecting of the noblest of humane affections, natural love, that powerful Passion whereby all things and all Men are governed.

CHAP. XX.

That Love always pursues what it thinks good; and is never satisfied till it hath obtained it.

THough the properties of Love in general be better known by experience, than they can be by discourse; yet it may serve to good purpose to say something of them. The first whereof is, That Love always embraceth what is good, either in truth or appearance; for Mans Inclinations are still the same, as they were in the state of Innocence; tho much depraved; we still pursue

Ineffabilem prorsus ego sentio amorem Dei; & qui sentiri magis quam dici possit. Basil.

sue after what we think will make us happy only we mistake. Like the Bramble in the Fable, which having lost a rich freight of the finest Silks, now takes hold of the coarsest stuffs to recover its loss; so have all men a secret sense, that they are fain from a state of felicity, and have lost a Jewel of infinite value, which still they esteem and love, though they know it not; and therefore now, to recover the eminency of their first station, they are climbing upon every Mole-hill, petty Mountains of Ambition; to recover their lost Jewel, they pick up every Pebble-stone; where they see a glimpse of Beauty, where they relish any thing of Goodness, there they set their love and affection, as if that were the *summum Bonum*, which is but an imperfect shadow of it; so that we are like an infortunate Lover, who, being seized by a Phrensie, forgets and forsakes his Mistress and dotes on her Picture. We neglect God, and fall in love with those things that have the least impress of his perfection; and then, like Idolaters, we pay that worship to the work, which is due to the maker only.

Therefore ought we to take great heed, that we be not taken with every seeming Beauty or Goodness; but that we examin whether that be the thing which will make

us

us intirely happy, and beyond which we shall wish for nothing. For if it be not, we must pass it by, and seek further, and never rest, nor set our hearts on any thing, till we have found that true and perfect good, most obvious and easie to be found, which being loved will be certainly possest, and being possest, will make us perfectly happy; and that is God alone. It is the Meditation of S. *Augustine*, "Thou maist seek "after Honours, and not obtain them; "thou maist labour for "Riches, and remain "poor; thou maist dote "on Pleasures, and "have many sorrows: "but our God, the "Supreme Goodness, "saith, Who ever "sought me and found "me not? who ever "desired me, and ob- "tained me not? whoever loved me, and "mist of me? I am with him that seeks me; "he hath me already that wisheth for me; "and he that loveth me is sure of me. The "way to come to me is neither long nor "difficult; Love makes me present to "every Lover.

Amaturus & honorem, & forte non perventurus: —— quis me amavit, & non ad me perveriit? —quisquis me quaerit cum ipso sum, &c. Tract. 10. in Ep. Johan.

A second property of Love is. That it never rests, and is never satisfied until it be possest

posset of the beloved Object. This makes abused Worldlings so busie, so perpetually restless and active about the purchase of their beloved Vanities; and this makes devout Christians, like S. *Paul*, *Phil.* 3. never to count themselves to have apprehended; but forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth to those that are before; to press forward towards the mark, the price of their high calling, the object of their love and most passionate desires. This restlesness and activity of Love found work enough for the Fathers of the Deserts, whose indefatigable pains to mortifie their sinful Appetites; whose unwearied diligence to serve God; whose swift and violent motion Heaven-ward is the object of our wonder, and upbraids our sloth and negligence. They were almost wholly freed from the necessities of the Body, which is the endless task and work of other Men, and yet they were always employed; they had almost nothing to do, and yet were never idle; the love of Eternity, the love of Jesus kept them in action; they dwelt in peace, and yet were never at rest. Our heart, which is the seat of Love, can never be quiet, till it returns within Gods embraces, till it be posset of that infinite Good, which all men love, though but a few know it. See the several

ral plots and undertakings of Men in the World, 'tis Love sets them at work; 'tis to obtain what their blind affections run after, that they are so assiduous and so laborious. See the Prayers and Pious Exercises, the Self-denials and mortifications, the manifold acts of Charity and the great patience of Christians in the Church; 'tis Love also hath set them their task and makes them so diligent, so watchful till they have fulfilled it. We sometimes wipe the Tears from our eyes, and our Sorrows admit of joyful intervals; our Anger doth not last allways, and sometimes Hatred is asleep; but Love like the heart wherein it dwells, can never cease to act and move till it ceaseth to be; where ever Love is, it shews its life and power, and is always doing.

Habet omnis amor vim suam, nec potest vacare amor in anima amantis. Aug.

CHAP. XXI.

That Love is strong and effective, and sweetens all labours.

IN the third place, as Love is active, so it is effective; it doth not spend it self in useless and insignificant attempts; its strength

strength is great, as well as its endeavours. Great are the dangers and difficulties which Love overcomes; it carries the ambitious lover of Honour through many uneasie perils to a fading Laurel; it carries the covetous lover of Riches through the most hard and slavish labours to his false and treacherous Mammon; and it carries likewise the devout lover of Jesus through obedience and Self-humiliation, through Briars and uneasie Crosses, through patience and the greatest Sufferings to the enjoyment of his Beloved. Love can do all things, since it brought God down from Heaven to become Man, and die for Man. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* saith St. *Paul, Shall tribulation or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay in all these things we are more than Conquerors through him that loved us; for I am perswaded that neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord,* Rom. 8. 35. &c. As much as to say, that the power of Love is irresistable, that it answers all objections and conquers all obstacles. Notwithstanding mans high provocations and great unworthiness, Love made the Almighty lay down the

arms

arms of his just Vengeance, and open his bosom of Mercy; to give his dear and only Son to man for a Saviour; *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*, John 3. 16. And likewise man is enabled, or rather forced by love to do and suffer any thing: As soon as Divine Love enters a mans heart; of proud, it makes him humble; of lustful and intemperate, it makes him chast and sober; of covetous, it makes him charitable; of dainty and effeminate, it fits him to be a Martyr. No ill habits so deeply rooted, but Love can pluck them up; no Cross so heavy, but love can bear it. *Many waters cannot quench love* (saith *Solomon*) *neither can the floods drown it*, Cant. 8. 7. No, the strongest torrent of Affliction is but like drops of water sprinkled upon the Fire, it encreaseth the flames and the ardency thereof. *Love is as strong as death*, verse 6. and Death is very strong, stronger than all visible Creatures. We daily fight against Death, and beat it back; by Rest, and Food, and Physick, we dispute the victory with it many years; but it is ever victorious at last; so is

Magnum verbum fortis ut mors dilectio; magnificentius exprimi non potuit fortitudo charitatis, quis enim morti resistat? igni-

is Love, it never gives over, till it hath conquered all oppositions; its courage encreaseth together with its difficulties; the more obstacles in its way, the greater its endeavours, the more fierce its contentions. Death severs a man from himself, and disunites what seems inseparable: Love also takes the Lovers Soul from him, and unites it to the beloved, so that he lives more in what he loves than in himself; *Love is as strong as Death.* Death converts the greatest Sinners, or at least keeps them from sinning at all, any longer: so doth Love, it certainly mortifies all, even the most reigning Sins, it will not suffer them to sin, that love God. We can tame wild Beasts by industry; overcome the barrenness of the Earth by labor; resist the angry Elements by Art and Physick; no evil but hath a remedy, only Death hath none, there is no striving against it; so that nothing can better express the irresistible power of Love, than to say that it is *as strong as Death.*

hoc, undis, ferro, regibus resistitur, vetusta una mors, quæ ei resistit; nihil illa fortius, propterea viribus ejus charitas comparatur. Aug. in Psal. 121.

The last property of Love I shall now mention is, that Love sweetens bitter things, makes our labours pleasant, and even our sufferings delightful. How heavy is that yoke

yoke which is imposed by an ungratefull hand? The Souldier prest to the service can hardly bear his Arms; but he that is inrolled by Love, thinks them light, and bears them with pleasure. The Slave that works in the Mines counts his very life a burthen; the niggard that works much harder, likes well his drudgery, because the love of Riches is his Task-master. He that serves his Master out of fear, works faintly and with a heavy heart; he that serves him out of love, doth it diligently and yet with chearfulness. The Christian Pilgrim who is driven Heaven-ward with fears and terrors, goeth on with much reluctancy, and a sorrowful heart; he that is *drawn with the cords of Love*, follows with joyfulness, minds not the ruggedness of his way, and even rejoyceth in his weariness, because it brings him nearer and nearer to his Beloved; he that could say, *the love of Christ constraineth us*, could say also, *we rejoyce in tribulations*. 'Twas the love of *Jesus* made Primitive Christians work hard and suffer much, with comfort and unspeakable joy; and 'tis for want of that sweet and Divine Love that Christians now find sorrow and great

Nullo modo sunt onerosi labores amantium, sed etiam ipsi delectant, sicut venantium, piscantium: interest ergo

great difficulty in that little they do or suffer for *Jesus*. The labours of Love are ever pleasant; nothing is hard that Love binds upon us.

quid amatur: nam in eo quod amatur, aut non laboratur, aut labor amatur. Aug.

CHAP. XXII.

A farewel to all Sinful Desires.

THis great power of Love is now to be drawn into act, and these considerations to be reduced into practice.

Now therefore enter more seriously than ever this Cloister of Love; engage thy self further into the society of the true Lovers of *Jesus*; enter now actually and affectionately upon *the work and labour of love.*

Remember now thy Baptismal Vows, remember them I say, now that *the love of Christ constrains*, binds thee to fulfil them. Things are best preserved by that which first gave them Being. And now thy making good that stipulation, thy part of that gracious Covenant whereby thou art related to Christ; that (according to the design of that Sign of the Cross, which was drawn upon thee as the badge of thy Pro-

Profession) thou *wouldst not be ashamed to profess the Faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner, against sin, the world and the devil, and to continue his faithful Souldier and Servant unto thy lives end:* So now thou shouldest accomplish this Promise by *faith working by love.*

Now then retire a while and enter thy Closet; sequester thy thoughts from the World, and confer with thy Soul about thy duty and thy great intereſt. Call to mind the obligations the Love of *Jesus* hath laid upon thee, and how thou haſt promiſed to requite it, by renouncing all things that are contrary to thy love and duty to him. *By renouncing the Devil and all his works, the vain pomps and vanities of the world, and the covetous desires of the same; as also the sinful lusts of thy flesh.* Now thou art to approve thy self a true Lover and Servant of Jesus, by departing from these by repentance and amendment. Leave them therefore and forsake them, these Enemies of thy Saviour, of thy Love and of thy Happineſs. Let thy Soul full of the love of *Jesus* thus meditate, and reſolve and expreſs thy devout affections to him that died for thee.

The love of *Jesus* hath prevailed; I find my heart wounded; I can no longer reſiſt the charms of his love; he hath woed me

so

so long, and with so much kindness, that now my heart is his; *I will love him, because he first loved me.* Now it repenteth me that ever I rejected his Suit, that ever I was unkind to him; it grieved me that ever I countenanced and preferred his Rivals, the lusts of Sensuality, Covetousness, and Pride, which I renounced in my Baptism; I will now exclude them wholly. This is the first mark Jesus shall receive of my sincere affection to him, that I will entertain nor cares no longer those his Enemies with whom I have had an unhappy intelligence for too long a time; henceforth, if they come near me, I will endeavour to drive them away; if they come after me, I will flee; if they persevere in their attempts they shall get nothing else, but shame and denials. Away from me then ye wicked Spirits, with all your tempting Allurements, worldly Vanities, deceitful Riches, sensual Pleasures; I remember that I renounced you all, when first I gave up my name to *Jesus*, when he first began to shew and seal his Love to me, and to engage mine, I then renounced *the Devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh.* I now remember those my engagements, and grieve that I have not kept

them; and therefore will hate you the more, that you made me forget my promises, and break my holy Vows. Now will I be revenged of you, ye proud and ambitious designs, lustful thoughts, greedy desires of wealth, I will now kill and crucifie you. Henceforth it shall be my honour, that I am a Servant of *Jesus*; it shall be my delight and pleasure, that I am a lover of *Jesus*; and it shall be my wealth, that he is mine as I am his. *Jesus* hath done and suffered much to declare his love, and to deserve mine; he hath come down from Heaven, and humbled himself to my mean and low condition; he hath lived poor and despised; he hath been afflicted and persecuted; he hath died for me; *Hereby I know that he loves me, because he laid down his life for me*, but ye his unworthy Rivals never gave me any assurance of your affection, never did or suffered any thing for me. *Jesus* exposed himself to shame, that I might become glorious, endured pains that I might have pleasure; he became poor that I might be enriched: But Covetousness offers me Riches to pierce me through with many sorrows; Lust enticeth me to wound me, when I have consented to it; and Pride promiseth me Honours, to cumber me and expose me to Envy. *Jesus* is infinitely lovely, he is all

Per-

Perfection and Goodness; and he desires to be loved, not for any advantage of his own, but to make his Lovers entirely and eternally happy: But you painted Idols of abused Mortals, are in your selves ugly and even loathsom; though at a great distance ye may seem somewhat fair, yet near at hand ye are nothing but deformity; ye always prove vain and vexatious; ye seek to enter Mens hearts, only to tyrannize and torment them, and betray them to eternal sorrows. *Jesus* is a true and constant lover, he ever owns his Friends; he never fails them that love him, he helps them in their distresses, he comforts them in their sorrows, and when they die he stands by them: But ye temporal deceitful pleasures are false and inconstant; ye forsake your Friends in the greatest need, ye flatter them for a few Summer days, while the Sun shines kindly upon them; but in the rigors of Winter, when an unprosperous storm ariseth you are gone, your leave them to die comfortless; they carry nothing of you when they go from hence, but the bitter remembrance of your treacherousness. *Jesus* is a most gratefull Lover, he ever returns love for love; he is ever found of them that seek him, to them that desire him he ever gives himself; every true Lover of *Jesus* is sure to enjoy

him: But you worldly Enjoyments are generally most unkind to your most passionate Lovers; ye flee from them that run after you, ye grieve and vex your greatest admirers, ye are ever uncertain, false and ungrateful; I will therefore never love you again; nay, I resolve to hate and persecute you; to mortifie and watch against my Lusts, my Pride and Covetous desires. But *Jesus* shall reign in my heart; him will I love, him will I serve, him will I endeavour to please in all things; I will be wholly his, therefore I renounce all friendship with you that are his Enemies. There can be no agreement betwixt the Holy *Jesus* and this sinfull World; *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him,* 1 John 2. 15. *Lord, we beseech thee grant thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, and with pure hearts and minds to follow thee the only God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Amen.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

That the love of Jesus, *and the love of Sin can never consist together.*

FUrther consider, O my Soul, that *Jesus* (my Blessed Master) is the Prince of Purity, he will never abide in the same heart with Intemperance and with fleshly lusts. He is meek and lowly, Pride cannot follow him. By works of mercy and Charity he calls us to the possession of Heavenly treasures, therefore greedy Worldly-mindedness can never entertain nor prefer his promise. Lust, Pride, Covetousness can never abide with the love of Christ, they can never be reconciled, *Jesus* and they are mortal Enemies. Mortal I may call them, because they were his murtherers, or rather, because he died to put them to death; *We were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from our vain conversation: but with the precious Blood of Christ.* *Jesus* shed his Blood to redeem us, as well from the practice and commission, as from the punishment and destruction of Sin, or rather of both together, for they are not to be put asunder. Moral and natural Evil ever go hand in hand, as Happiness is inseparable from Goodness and Vertue. *Blessed are the*

pure in heart; for *without holiness no man shall see God*. St. *Paul* therefore saying, that *Christ died unto sin*, that is, to take away sin, infers from thence, *that we being baptized into Christs death, our old man is now crucified, that the body of Sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin*, Rom. 6. And St. *Peter* likewise makes it the purpose, why *Christ did bear our sins* (their punishment) *on his own body on the Tree, that we* thereby *being dead unto sin, might live unto righteousness*, 1 Pet. 2. 24. Christ *gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from this present evil world*. Gal. 1. 4. *The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the Devil* 1 Joh. 3. 8. Sin is that which God hates above all things; Sin is that which is most contrary to his nature, & to our happiness: And so *Jesus* was crucified, that Sin might be destroyed, he died that Sin might live no longer; and therefore I renounced all Sin, the Devil and all his works, when *Jesus* owned me for his friend, and I owned him for my Lord and Master, they are incompatible, their inconsistency is irreconcilable; *If I hold to the one, I must despise the other*; *If I love one I must hate the other*, I will therefore, as I am most bound, and as I have promised, forsake Sin and follow *Jesus*; I will fight against his Enemies, and side with him against my own corrupt

corrupt affections; while I have a being, I will love and obey *Jesus*.

CHAP. XXIV.

Of outward helps and instruments of Love and Obedience.

NOw to effect these good resolutions, we must use means to bring our Hearts to a devout and Religious temper, and so to keep them. It will not suffice that we intend well, except we perform. We may soon be diverted from our best designs, either by Temptations, or by the interruption of Worldly business. Therefore the revolutions of Time, which bring on us the snares and disturbances of this life, must also bring with them the frequent returns of our pious Exercises and Christian duties.

We must often recollect our thoughts, and listen to the Divine Love of our Blessed *Jesus*. We must entertain our Souls with him, renew our religious purposes, and call to mind those special considerations which use to affect us most of all. We must often resort to those Fountains of Grace, which God hath opened to his Church in his public worship, and the

several dispensations of his Word and Sacraments by his Ministers. To these we must be sure to add Fastings, Alms, and Prayers, than which we can do nothing more acceptable to God; nothing that can better declare how much we love him, and how heartily we devote to him our Bodies, Souls and Estates. All these are not only means, but duties of Religion also, not to be omitted upon any pretence whatever.

But now the following have more of indifferency, less of necessity in them; but yet may have a good influence upon the Inner-man; may move our affections, and declare or increase our devotion, and our sincerity. Such as are the constant reading of good Books; Set-times of Meditation and Mental Prayer; the enjoyning to our selves a strict silence for some convenient time, to bridle our Tongue, and so to use it to discipline; and, as it were, to unsay and retract inwardly by hearty Repentance what we have said amiss.

Sometimes like *Hezekiah*, to turn our selves to the Wall to mourn in secret; I mean, to retire from the World, and enter our Closet, there to confer with God and our Souls about Eternity, and the way to a blessed one.

Every

Every day or at least once a week, to cast our eyes back, and take an account of our lives, especially of what we have done since our last Examen; that we may repent and rectifie our Follies, renew our good Resolutions, and increase our diligence and our Care.

In our Adorations and Penitential Prayers, to cast our selves on the ground with the humblest prostration; to hold our hands like Criminals bound, supplicating before the Judge; to look up to Heaven; to smite our Breasts; and so excite our zeal and contrition.

Some are much affected with watching, with visible representations; the sight of a dying man, and such Instructions and Mementoes as enter the Soul by the eyes, which being the quickest and most apprehensive sense we have, conveys its objects to the mind with the greater force and make the deeper impression.

Segnius irritant animos dëmissa per aures.

Quam quæ sint oculis subjecta fidelibus, & qua.

Ipse sibi tradit spectator ———

Here in my first Edition I had mentioned the making on our selves the sign of the Cross, which could not escape being tax'd of Popery by some, that call by that name

every thing they diſlike. I ſhould not be much concerned at the charge, but that I find Popery is made a thing too ancient and too Innocent, and ſo miſtaken. It hath indeed abuſed that primitive Ceremony, and made it ſubſervient to Superſtition; but the right uſe of it is not therefore unlawfull. Thoſe zealous and holy Chriſtians in the firſt Ages, who frequently ſigned themſelves with that Sacred Sign, intended it as a tacit Invocation of the name of Chriſt; as an outward profeſſion, that they owned him for their Lord and Saviour; and as a ſignature to themſelves, that they were devoted to his ſervice, and ready to die for his ſake.

I might produce and plead their reaſons and example; the Cuſtom of our Church, and it's 30th Canon, but that I would perſwade no man to a Rite ſo indifferent. If any will reiterate it on themſelves, where they give no offence, to the ſame purpoſe as it was intended, when they were made Chriſtians, *In token that they will not be aſhamed to profeſs the Faith of Chriſt crucified, &c.* I ſhall not condemn him; and I ſhall in no wiſe quarrel with them that omit it. If we ſincerely love our Divine Maſter, and are faithful and obedient to him, it is no great matter what outward means and inſtruments we uſe.

But

But yet experience, and the approbation of the best of men, have recommended these I have now mentioned, as many ways useful and profitable. They, and others of the like nature, and Church Ceremonies, are said by *Calvin, to assist our infirmities, to increase our devotion, and to make Religion more solemn and more venerable.* Inst. l. 4. c. 10. §. 28, & 31.

So the great Duties be secured, these are indifferent, and may vary according to circumstances; but yet they are not useless, nor totally to be rejected. Those outward rites and actions have an influence upon our hearts; they not only express our inward Piety, but they increase it. *Though they proceed from the affections, they re-act upon them* (as St. *Augustine* saith) *they augment that fervour which at first produced them.*

Nescio quomodo, cum hi motus corporis fieri, nisi motu animi præcedente non possint, iisdem rursus exterius visibilitur factis, ille interior invisibilis qui eos fecit, augeatur. Aug.

And so said a Blessed Martyr of our Church, that *the inward worship of God while we live in the Body, needs external helps, and all little enough to keep it in any vigour.*

These voluntary observations should not lead

lead them to ſcruple or cenſoriouſneſs, that are pleaſed to uſe them; and ſhould not be clamoured againſt by others indiſcreetly and uncharitably; for in themſelves they are *adminicula pietatis*, handmaids to devotion and holy contrition. And they that know themſelves are ſenſible, that they want all poſſible helps to ſtir them up and relieve their dulneſs. When our underſtandings are convinced we have not quite done, means muſt be uſed alſo to effect the fancy, and to engage the affections. *And he had need be very ſure of his ſtrength, that refuſeth the aſſiſtance of all Auxiliaries.*

CHAP. XXV.

A paſſionate Meditation on the Paſſion of our Bleſſed Saviour.

MY *Love is crucified*, ſaid that loving and holy Martyr *Ignatius*, declaring how earneſtly he wiſhed to die for *Jeſus* and ſo, conſidering the Paſſion of *Jeſus*, I meditate with him; *My Love is crucified*, my deareſt Saviour dies in moſt bitter pains;

Ζῶν γὰρ ἐμοὶ ἐρῶν τὸ ἀποθανεῖν, ὁ ἐμὸς ἔρως ἐσταύρωται.

pains; he hath been rudely bound and drag'd from place to place; he hath been stript, tied to a Post, and whipt like a vile slave; he hath been buffeted and caned, and abused with all manner of contumelies; and now I see him crowned with Thorns, all over spittle and Blood. I see him stretched upon the Cross, where his Hands and his Feet are nailed; his Head hangs down; I read in his pale Face and his weeping Eyes, the extremity of his pain, the anguish of his wounded Soul. Lord, art thou he whom my Soul loveth? art thou my deareſt *Jesus*! were it my Father, my Brother, my Friend, or my Benefactor that should suffer this undeservedly, how would I pity them! but should they suffer this upon my account; Lord, I could not outlive such a sight! if nothing else, Love would certainly wound my Soul to death. But behold it is so; this crucified, this dying man is my Father, he gave me my being; he is

O Domine Jesu Christe, si intelligentia quam mihi dedisti uti vellem sicut deberem, cernerem manifeste, quo modo, imo quam fine modo, à me creatura tua amari meruerit, qui prior dilexisti me; tantus & tantum, & gratis tantillum, & talem, & ingratum. Idior.

is my Brother, he came down from Heaven and took human flesh that he might have that relation to me; he is my Friend, he lays down his life to save mine; he is my greatest Benefactor, from him I receive all I have; all the Blessings, the good things I enjoy I owe to his kindness.

But now my Soul, suppose that from his Cross thou shouldst hear him thus expressing his love, and bespeaking thine. "Christian, dearest Christian, for whom "here I die, consider seriously, imprint "it in thine heart, what in my words, "what in my mysteries thou readest of my "suffering for thee, consider who I am, "what I endure, and to what end. I am "the Eternal Son of God, whom the An"gels adore: I became Man, to make thee "partaker of the Divine Nature; I am in"finitely rich, the whole universe is mine: "I became thus destitute of all things to "purchase true Riches for thee; I am of "an Almighty Power, the whole World "was made and subsists by me: I am now "weak to make thee strong, I am over"come of mine Enemies to make thee con"quer thine; I am crowned with glory, "and cloathed with Majesty: I now wear "these Thorns, and am become naked, to "cloath thee with robes of Righteousness, "and Crown thee with a Royal Diadem;

"I

" I am the inexhaustible Fountain of Joy
" and Happiness. I now endure sorrows
" and miseries, to make thee joyful and
" happy; I am infinitely pure and inno-
" cent. I am become a Sacrifice for sin,
" to merit thy pardon, and to sanctifie and
" make thee holy; I am the Author of
" life, *the first and the last.* I now die to
" make thee live for ever; nothing but
" love moves me thus to suffer for thee,
" and nothing but love I require for it.
" Dearest Soul, thy sins are more grievous
" to me than my wounds, add not sorrow
" to my sorrow, by remaining impeni-
" tent; deny not this request to thy dying
" bleeding Saviour,

" that thou wouldst mortifie thy lusts, and forsake thy sins; all that is past I heartily forgive, if thou becomest a true penitent. I freely give my self for thee, and beg, that thou wouldst give thy self to me.

Aspice serve Dei, sic me posuere Judæus.
Aspice mortalis, pro te datur hostia talis.
Aspice devote, quoniã sic pendeo pro te.
Introitum vitæ reddo tibi, redde mihi te.
In cruce sum pro te, qui peccas desine pro me.

To this, O my Soul, with the greatest love and wonder thou maist thus reply.

Desine do veniam, dic culpam, corriga vitam.

What

What shall I say now, deareſt Lord? Words cannot anſwer thee. I am amazed, I am aſtoniſhed, I know not how to ſpeak, my tongue cannot expreſs what my heart feels. Lord, I will ſay nothing! I will anſwer with ſighs and tears, with devout affections, by reſigning and giving up my Body and Soul to thee. I will anſwer by obedience, by actions; by now falling to work to reform my life, to mortifie my ſinful luſts, to cut off the members of the body of ſin. Sweeteſt Jeſu, I will love thee with all the affections my heart can entertain; no boſom ſin ſhall be ſo dear to me, but for thy ſake I will heartily part with it; no luſt ſhall be ſo pleaſing, but I will kill it at thy requeſt and command; even my natural deſires and inclinations will I gladly deny, when they come in competition with that duty and love I owe, and ever will pay my deareſt *Jeſus*. Sweeteſt Lord it was I had deſerved to be ſmitten, to be covered with ſhame, to be deprived of life: And thou ſuffereſt all theſe for me; for me vile wretch; for me my Lord; was it for me? O where ſhall I find ſuch another Friend! or rather what ſhall I do, to requite thy kindneſs and mercy! I can give thee nothing but love and thanks; and that will I do. O my Bleſſed Lord, who was ſpet upon; I humbly worſhip thee. Thou

waſt

waſt reviled like a vile ſlave; I praiſe thee, and own my ſelf thy Servant. The Jews refuſed thee for their King; but thou art mine, thou art my Bleſſed Maſter. I care not what becomes of me here, ſo I may come to Bleſs and adore thee for ever! Lord, if their is a place where thou art not loved and magnified, let me never come into it. Aſſiſt me deareſt Lord; let no pleaſure or pain, no fear or hope, no profit or loſs, no temptations within or without, ever make me to offend thee. *O ye Spirits and Souls of the Righteous, Praiſe ye the Lord, praiſe him and magnifie him for ever!* O that I could but joyn with you, to expreſs worthily my thanks and gratitude! O that all the world would joyn with me to praiſe and glorifie the Lord that died for us! Bleſſed Jeſus, *cleanſe the thoughts of our hearts, by the inſpiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnifie thy holy Name, now and for evermore.* Amen.

CHAP. XXVI.

Of a ſincere Amendment, which muſt be wrought by proper means.

BUt fickle and unhappy Creatures that we are, we often promiſe well, but ſeldom

ſeldom ſtand to our engagements; our reſolutions are good, and our performances very defective; *The ſpirit is willing, but the fleſh is weak.* I muſt not therefore, O my Soul, reſt in generals, but I muſt reſolve more eſpecially againſt thoſe ſins I am inclined to; and not only againſt them, but alſo upon the means whereby I may overcome and mortifie them; as avoiding the occaſions and enticements, inflicting on my ſelf ſuch ſeverities as may be proper remedies, and tying my ſelf to ſuch pious Exerciſes as I know will drive away the temptation. To forſake my ſins, is not to forbear drunkeneſs, when perhaps I am not inclined to it; or to avoid Swearing, when I look upon it as an unpleaſing and unprofitable ſin; or to hate Covetouſneſs, when by nature I am liberal: But knowing what ſin pleaſeth me moſt, what vice my temper inclines me to, and what temptation is moſt ſtrong and importunate upon me, by my Calling or my Company, againſt that to fortifie my ſelf, and employ the utmoſt of my ſtrength; againſt that to watch and pray, and uſe ſincere and earneſt endeavours. To forſake my ſins, is not to ſay, I will forſake them. Some Men, when they are called upon by fear, adverſity, or the ſecret voice of God within them, are forward enough to engage with

with the Elder Brother in the Gospel; *Lord I will go and work in thy Vineyard*; but their hot zeal and hasty promise soon decays into negligence, and at last into a cold denial. Though I resolve against my natural corruptions never so seriously, that will not subdue them, without I use proper means for it; *to take up my Cross and follow Christ, to forsake all for him, to deny my self, to take the kingdom of Heaven by force, to cut off my right hand, and pluck out my eyes when they offend*, is more than barely to resolve, and promise high and proceed no further. *They that are Christs have* (not only verbally renounced, but actually) *crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts*, Gal. 5. 24. therefore now I have given up my self to Christ and desire to be his; I must pray heartily, and watch diligently against my sins, those especially that are most pleasing and customary to me; I must, like St. *Paul*, not *fight in the air* against generals, *but keep under my body, be temperate in all things*, and strive to the utmost for the *incorruptible Crown*; I must use that violence to my self, such harsh applications; acts of penance and mortification, of my own or the Spiritual Physicians appointment, as are fit and requisite to cure my distemper, to expel or reform that evil inclination which is inconsistent with my love to Jesus.

To

To that end it will be very usefull frequently to meditate on the Passion of Christ, the day of our change, our appearance in Judgment, the joys of Heaven, the torments of Hell, and the amazing consideration of Eternity; and I am perswaded, that it would be an excellent instrument of Reformation, and very useful in many cases, to acquaint the Spiritual Judge and Physician with the distempers of our Souls and the state of our Conscience. But whatever means we use for our amendment, we must be sure that they be effectual. And as he that would cure a natural Evil, applies a stronger remedy where a weaker is found insufficient; so must he that would cure the spiritual diseases of his Soul, still use stronger applications; boggle at nothing that may be requisite to escape his danger and recover his health. But be sure we really desire to be healed, for then all things conducing to that end, will be welcome and acceptable. *Si desideras; via brevis est & suavis: si negligis, longa est & laboriosa. Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things; now they do it to obtain a corruptible Crown, but we an incorruptible.* He that would vanquish his Antagonist, was in the first place to vanquish himself, to endure hardship and severity, and use

uſe all endeavours for the victory, for a fading Garland; ſo he that will overcome his luſts, and maſter himſelf, and obtain that heavenly Crown which never fadeth, muſt uſe great induſtry, many arts, all means that can conduce to that end.

CHAP. XXVII.

Love the beſt Inſtrument of Self-Reformation and true Penitence, with an act of hearty Contrition.

BUT the voluminous directions of Caſuiſts and Confeſſioniſts cannot reach all caſes and all particulars: to ſhorten our labour therefore, let the Love of *Jeſus* do the work of Self-reformation, and it will be ſooneſt and beſt done. Love will find out the moſt effectual means for the extermination of our ſins, and Love will uſe them to the beſt purpoſe. Certain it is, that Love in all inſtances, ſets men upon acts of Self-denial; as great Generals and many more, who forego the peaceable enjoyment of the comforts they might have at home, and expoſe themſelves to dangers, becauſe they love Honour; Merchants who forſake their deareſt Relations, and run through many great

great troubles and perils, because they love Gain; and the more generous love of Friendship, which hath caused many to chuse great inconveniences, and even death to serve their Friends: And therefore certain it is also that the Love of *Jesus* will make his yoke, and even his Cross easie; will make us deny our selves and forbear what displeaseth him, though otherwise pleasing to us. "That men might be "without excuse, God hath made a short "work upon the Earth: (saith St. *Aug.*) by "contracting his im-"menfity into the nar-"row dimensions of "Man, he hath ab-"breviated his Do-"ctrine, and our task. *Jesus* is the Center and the sum of our Faith and Religion, and the love of *Jesus* is the content of our duty. *I have determined* (saith St. *Paul*) *not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified:* and, *we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to them that are called, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God,* 1 Cor. 2. 2. and 1. 24. that is, in whom God fully reveals his will, and gives

Ut nemo habeat excusationem in die judicii voluit Deus, sicut scriptum est, consummare & abbreviare verbum super terram, Aug de Doct. Christiana, l. 1. c. 1.

gives us full power to fulfil it. Therefore (saith the Apostle) *God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of Jesus Christ my Lord; by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world*, Gal. 6. 14. The knowledge and love of *Jesus*, our Crucified Saviour, is the most proper means to teach us our duty, the greatest motive to undertake it, and the best instrument to perform and effect it withal; it will kill our lusts, crucifie the members of the body of sin, and carry us through the labours and difficulties of Penitence and sincere Amendment; it will be the fulfilling of Repentance, as it is *the fulfilling of the Law*. For, as Love is strong to overcome strong enemies, to kill the greatest sins; so is it wise and quick-sighted to see and to find out the least. A loving Friend will not only not slander and defame his Friend, nor rob, or strike, or murther him; but will forbear all words and actions, which might bring him the least grief or inconvenience; Love will not only not give the greatest provocations, but even not disoblige or displease in the least instances.

And now my Soul, I must apply this home, and thereby examin how true are my resolves and protestations; if my love to *Jesus* my Lord be sincere, it will not only keep me from confederation with his

his profest and greatest Enemies, but even make me shun and forsake the most secret and contemptible of them. I mean, that the love of *Jesus* will never suffer me to entertain any the least sin; and whenever I find that I have been unhappily seduced to commit any, it will cause me to grieve and sadly to repent; that I have displeased my dearest Saviour, and wounded that tender love I owe him, and profess ever to have for him. And indeed, it is reported of many devout persons, great lovers of *Jesus*, that they would sorrow and weep for ordinary failings, for small omissions, more than others would for much greater sins. Divine Love, like a bright burning flame, will feel a commotion and disturbance by the least drop of water that falls upon it; a small irregularity will be more grievous to a pious lover of *Jesus*, than great crimes to another. Therefore he that could say, *the love of Christ constraineth us*, would also highly complain, and groan under the sense of our unavoidable imperfection; *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this Death?* Rom. 7. 24. Nothing will make us more sensible of our least and most common sins, than the love of *Jesus*; it will make us angry at and impatient

tient of them, and earnest and severe in reforming of them.

Now therefore, as I profess my self a sincere and affectionate lover of *Jesus*, I am obliged to undo, as much as may be, what I have done amiss, and to do it no more; this earnestly and vigorously I must now resolve, and beg the Divine Grace and assistance to perform it. I must make amends and restitution to those I have any ways damnified in body, goods, or name, and even ask their pardon for the injury; and then bewail my sins, grieve that I have offended my Divine and loving Master, and beg his forgiveness; and endeavour by tears and contrition to wash away the stains and spots wherewith my Soul is polluted, and displeaseth the holy eyes of the Holy *Jesus*. And so to own and to love *Jesus* my Master, binds upon me all the duties of holy penitence; Repentance must now be my work, and I must live like a true Penitent. Especially on *Lent*, *Fridays*, and such other times as the Church appointed, and devout Christians use for mortification, and more solemn devotion. I must then, and even every night call my ways to remembrance. And (besides those greater provocations wherewith I have offended my Lord, in the days of my folly and inconsideration)

I ought also to take notice of those sins of daily incursion I last committed, and weep over them all, and beg for pardon; and this I say, especially on Penitential days. For though true contrition should always abide in the heart of every one that truly loves *Jesus*, yet there are occasions and proper times to bring it forth; when we are to make it our business to soften our hearts, and make them melt into penitent tears. Which must be done by religious Exercices, pious Meditations, and such acts of contrition as this.

My dearest *Jesus*, I owe to thy kindest Goodness my being, and all the blessings I enjoy; and I know that thou didst come down from Heaven to die on the Cross, that I might not die in Hell to eternity; to suffer a bitter and shameful death, that I might live in eternal Joys. I hope to see thy glorious face oneday; I hope to receive a Crown from thy gracious hands; I hope to dwell in thy blissful society for ever. Dearest Saviour, if thou wert upon Earth, I would go all the World over to prostrate my self before thee, to kiss the ground thy Holy Feet should tread, to serve thee to, shew my love and gratitude to thee. Dearest Lord, I would now joyfully give up my life for thee; I would lose the last drop of my blood to

please

pleaſe and glorifie thee; I would dye rather than deny thee. Why then, unhappy wretch that *I* am, do *I* offend thee, to whom *I* owe my ſelf, and all that *I* have? Why do *I* wound thee by my tranſgreſſions? who waſt wounded for them by thy love? Why do I grieve thee, who purchaſeſt eternal Joys for me? Why do I diſpleaſe thee, with whom I hope to live and dwell and from whom *I* expect mercy and ſalvation? Why do *I* ſin againſt thee, whom I love with all my Soul? and, why do not *I* live to thee, for whom *I* would die? Lord, if what thou haſt done and ſuffered for me, be not able to win my heart, what canſt thou do more? But, O break and yeild this ſinful heart of mine? open the way to tears and grief? and let the love of thy deareſt Saviour enter, and fill and ever poſſeſs thee.

CHAP. XXVIII.

That Love will ſweeten as well as produce the trueſt Penitence; and that true Wiſdom, not Melancholy, is the Guide of ſincere Penitents.

Such Conſiderations and Soliloquies as theſe will produce not only *lacrymas*

doloris, tears of Grief, but alſo *lacrymæ amoris*, tears of Love and true contrition; and moreover will make pleaſant all the ſeverities of Repentance, which are ſo unacceptable and ſo repugnant to nature; thoſe things that would be ungratefull, as acts of Juſtice on our ſelves, or obedience and ſubmiſſion to a ſevere Maſter, will become delightfull as acts of Love to a gracious beloved Lord. *In amore nihil amari*, in Love all things are ſweet that are done or ſuffered, for the ſake of the beloved, *I take pleaſure in infirmities, in reproaches, in neceſſities, in perſecutions, in diſtreſſes for Chriſt ſake*, ſaith S. *Paul*, 2 Cor. 12. 10. that great lover of *Jeſus*; not that thoſe things are of their own nature pleaſant, whether inflicted by our ſelves or others; 'twas *for Chriſts ſake* that he liked them. He likewiſe that by Self-denial and revenge on himſelf, expreſſing his ſorrow for his ſins, ſhews his love to *Jeſus*, is certainly delighted with the moſt afflictive of thoſe voluntary ſufferings, as they are expreſſions of his Love. Accordingly 'tis ſaid of ſome Religious perſons, that their watchings and faſtings, and all the ſeverities to which they had tied themſelves as exerciſes of true Repentance, became in proceſs of time ſo pleaſant to them by the devoutneſs of their affections, that they

they were afraid of having their Paradice here in this World, and consulted their Spiritual guide about it. And certainly nothing but Love could carry the primitive *Solitaries* and *Cœnobites* through that uneasiness and hardship they willingly undertook, and endured many years, and rejoyced in, and would not have exchanged for all the pleasures in the world; they being perswaded that thereby they recovered and secured the favour of *Jesus* whom they loved, and whose love they esteemed more than all worldly enjoyments.

Perhaps it will be said by some, that such things are the effect of Melancholy, or a forward and misguided Zeal, not of true Piety. But let it be considered, that Natural love it self hath done, and still doth wonderfull things. The love of Friendship, the love of Lust, the love of Riches and Ambition have set Men upon difficult attempts, have made them despise great dangers, have carried them through many labours and sufferings, and perhaps as great as the most mortified Christian ever undertook for *Jesus* and Eternity. This hath been and is still the effect of Natural Love; and sure Divine Love, whose object is so infinitely more excellent, may do at least as much.

Besides, things temporal seem great at a distance; but near at hand, they appear as they are indeed, mean and contemptible: whereas contrariwise, things eternal, as they seem small and despicable afar off, so near at hand they appear great and immense, they overwhelm the mind. Hence it is, that dying Men who are on the brink of Eternity, are amazed at the thoughts and near prospect of it, and express great regret for their past inconsideration, and promise great things for the future, if they might live longer; looking upon the world as an empty nothing, not to be regarded where Eternity appears; and hence it is also, that they who approach things eternal, and view them by Meditation and Contemplation are of the same mind, have the same apprehensions of them, and act accordingly, doing those things which dying Men repent they have not done. For indeed, it is no illusion or deceit, but a great and real truth, that the World and all its concerns are nothing, compared to Eternity; and that we can never be too carefull to obtain eternal Joys, and avoid eternal Sorrows.

How much the blessed Apostles and Primitive Christians were acted by this consideration, St. *Paul* gives us to understand, saying, That whilst they looked not on

on things visible and transitory, but on things invisible and eternal, then their afflictions were *light and but for a moment*, 2 Cor. 4. 16. &c. though they lasted many years, and were so great, that the very thoughts of them can make us tremble, yet they were light and momentary, whilst they looked on Eternity; and *they fainted not, though their outward man decayed daily*, by their great Mortifications, and their laborious Zeal to serve God; and all this, *whilst we look not on the things that are seen, but on the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.* So that it is the effect of a wise and most rational consideration, to value and love him above all things, who by dying for us hath rescued us from eternal ruine, and obtained eternal happiness for us; and to make it appear by all means possible, doing or suffering any thing that may manifest our love to *Jesus*, and assure us of a blessed Eternity. It may justly be feared, that the indevotion and lukewarmness of very many, not the worst of Christians, will not make them acceptable to God, who declares that he will *spue them out of his mouth that are neither hot nor cold*, Rev. 3. 16. and that their carelessness and indifferency in Religious duties will hardly se-

their eternal intereſt. However, *I* think that it is a ſhame to ſee *Benedictins*, *Franciſcans*, *Carthuſians* and others, forſake the merriments, pleaſures and honours of the World, riſe up early, and late go to reſt, wear nothing but Cilices and coarſe Cloth, feed poorly and lye hard; and all this and much more to obſerve the Rule of S. *Bruno*, S. *Francis*, or ſome other fanſiful or melancholy *Devoto*, who obliged them to ſome abſurd, ſome needleſs, and many uneaſie obſervations; from whom they never received any benefit, and from whom they can expect no kind of remuneration; and at the ſame time to ſee Chriſtians nice and dainty, unwilling to deprive themſelves of any pleaſure, or to undergo any thing of hardſhip, for to obſerve the moſt reaſonable, holy and advantagious Rule of Chriſt; from whom they have received the greateſt favours, from whom they expect the greateſt rewards, and to whoſe ſervice and obedience they have devoted themſelves, by a ſolemn Vow in holy Baptiſm.

Chap.

CHAP. XXIX.

That Severities and Mortifications well regulated, are subservient to Repentance and the Love of Jesus.

I Know that some put too great a stress on such outward observations and corporal Austerities, and whilst they pervert the right use of them, greatly abuse themselves, and it may be deceive others also; but withal it must be granted, that others, in the other extreme, as unadvisely reject and condemn them as unprofitable and superstitious; and as unreasonably count themselves Religious because they despise, as others because they are fond of them. I shall not determine which of the two are in the worst error. Both certainly are mistaken, and the truth I apprehend to be this. The example of our Blessed Saviour, which is our best pattern and most profitable Lesson, plainly declares that such exercises are of great use, if not necessity, in our spiritual warfare against sin and temptations. So likewise the Precepts of *cutting off our right hand or foot*, when they make us offend; of *denying our selves, and taking up the Cross*; and many more to the same purpose, make it our

duty to use the proper and appointed means of Mortification. And that they are acceptable to God, we are assured by Christ himself; *When ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, but anoint thy head and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto Men to fast, but to thy Father which sees in secret; and thy Father which sees in secret shall reward thee openly*, Matt. 6. 18. Here Fasting stands for all acts of Self-denial, as being the most afflictive; and though the measures thereof be not described, yet that God hath a great respect and recompence for it, as well as for Prayers and Alms, is clearly affirmed by our Blessed Lord. So that there remains no doubt, but that all corporal Austerities prudently undertaken and managed, whether of our free suscepti on, or appointed to us by our Spiritual Guide, or the Governours of Christ's Church, to whom we are bound to submit our selves, (they being in his stead to us;) there is no doubt I say, but that these, especially the last, are generally very profitable; in some cases absolutely necessary, and always well pleasing to God. They are Instruments of Religion, whereby our Lusts are subdued, the Body kept under, and the Spirit it self mortified. They are marks of the sincerity of our sorrows, and our regret to have offended God. And they

are

are testimonials of our Love to Jesus, and our earnest desire to secure our duty to him for the future. All this is attested and proved true, not only by holy Scripture, and the Injunctions of the Christian Church; but also by the practice and experience of all devout persons, affectionate lovers of the Blessed Jesus.

CHAP. XXX.

A short Meditation for Penitential days.

REmember that Fasting and Alms are the two wings of Prayer, and that all three must unite their strength to raise our heavy hearts from this Earth, and lift them up to the Regions of Love. All three together ascended as a memorial before God, to plead for *Cornelius*. And our Blessed Saviour in one Sermon, *Mat. 6.* joyned them all three, and assigned to them one reward.

Thus therefore meditate, O my Soul, on thy days of humiliation.

My Blessed Lord, I know that I have been too much addicted to sensual pleasures; and now to speak my grief for it, hear I mourn and afflict my self, judging my self unworthy even of those refreshments

ments thou haſt allowed me. *I* have too much ſerved Mammon, and been too greedy of the world: And now *I* devote all *I* have to thee, giving this as an earneſt, that all *I* have is thine, and that now *I* will uſe it for my ſelf with more moderation, and ſpend it on others with greater charity; that thou maiſt be acknowledged and glorified for thy gracious gifts, and *I* may ſpeak my dependance on thee. My heart hath been too far from thee, and for my negligence in thy ſervice, thou maiſt juſtly blot my name out of the liſt of thy Servants; but here I return to thee with tears and prayers, begging that thou wouldſt be my Lord and Maſter, and I may be more faithful and active in waiting upon thee. I pour out my Soul before thee, deſiring that it may evermore cleave unto thee moſt affectionately; and that no Creature whatever may ever be able to draw me from that love and duty I owe thee.

Lord, had I offended any earthly Prince, that had power on me, in that grievous manner that I have offended thy Divine Majeſty, I ſhould be loaded with Irons, caſt into a Dungeon, and never admitted to ſee his face, and to beg his pardon. But thou giveſt me liberty and inviteſt me to plead for my ſelf; to come and proſtrate my

my ſelf at thy feet, to implore thy mercy, to retract my folly, and ſhew how much I am grieved for it; and if I am ſincere in this, I am aſſured of thy pardon, and that thou wilt receive me to favour again.

Lord, I beſeech thee, as it is written in thy Book that I have ſinned, ſo therein let it be regiſtred that I truly repent; that I judge and puniſh my ſelf, and endeavour what *I* can to undo and recall it again. Let the pennance I here perform, my ſighs and tears, my prayers and bitter ſorrows, entitle me to the merits of thy precious blood; let them ſtand on record, that I may be juſtified at the laſt day, to have been a true Penitent; that here the Judgments I have deſerved may be turned from me, that having been here numbred among thy Servants, who duly own thee before Men, I may hereafter be numbred among thy Saints in glory everlaſting. And Lord, let my love to thee be proportionable to my ſins and thy great mercies, that I alſo may hear that bleſſed voice, *much is forgiven thee, becauſe thou lovedſt much*; and I may go and ſin no more.

CHAP. XXXI.

That Repentance must look forward, to the securing of our duty for the time to come; with Instances and Resolutions to that effect.

BUt one great half of Repentance is yet behind; that which is most to be attended to, that which I must chiefly design in all acts of mortification is, that I return no more to those sins for the which I grieve & afflict my self. I must not only grieve that I have not forsaken those lusts and vanities I renounced when I became a Christian: but I must now actually forsake them and perform my vows. Except I do this, my repentance is vain, and my love not sincere. True contrition doth include love, and love includes an hearty obedience. But here lies the difficulty. The occasions and inticements of sin will doubtless come again; my thoughts will not always be fixt upon Divine Objects, my mind will return to the world; my passions will be disorderly, and my appetite unruly again. How shall I stand and resist, and be safe in the time of danger, in the hour of trial and temptation? This I must do, this I resolve to do; devoutly to lift up my Soul to Jesus my Master, and beg his assistance; to remember

member my engagements and my protestations, and consider how much I am bound to love and obey my Lord and Saviour rather than my Lusts, and how infinitely much I shall gain by it; to summon all the strength, and all the powers of devout Love to my aid? and to use all those means I have before resolved upon, for the resisting of temptations, and doing my duty.

Thus, when a provocation to anger is given, and I find my heart rise, and my spirits take fire and grow turbulent; instead of giving way to the mischievous passion, or suffering that it should proceed to hatred and revenge; I will turn aside and check my self with the remembrance of my meekest Saviour, *who was led as a Lamb to the slaughter, and opened not his mouth; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered the greatest injuries, yet used no threatning, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps.* I will remember how ill it becomes me to be angry with others, who have so much reason to be angry with my self for having so highly and frequently provoked my God to anger; I will consider how ill it becomes me to be revengful and severe to others, when all my hopes and all my happiness depend upon forbearance and mercy; I will think of, and fear that just exprobration

tion of my Lord against the revengful, *Thou wicked Servant, shouldst not thou have had compassion on thy Fellow-Servant, as I had pity on thee*; and I will remember that it is Jesus who died for me, Jesus for whom I would die, who intercedes for mine Enemies, and so will rather rejoice that I have some of that kind of love to repay to my dearest Saviour, which he shewed to me when I was his Enemy. If lust enticeth me to acts of impurity, *I* will call to mind the corruption and dissolution of this vile body of sin; *I* will think on my last account, the day of Judgment, and the dreadful flames of Hell; and *I* will remember him, who for me was crucified, and with whom my love hath crucified me; and that now is the time to make it appear that *I* love him, and to justifie the sincerity of my protestations. And so, for Covetousness, Pride, Intemperance, and all such temptations, *I* will reject their attempts and proffers with indignation, as a true Friend would scorn the solicitations to betray his Friend, thus saying to my self, what, shall *I* be false to him *I* love, to him that loveth me, who hath shed his blood for me, and to whom *I* have often protested that *I* would even die for him? Shall *I* break the sacred bonds of Love, and my most sacred Vows, and put my

Soul

Soul into a ſtate of regret, unquietneſs, ſhame and ſorrow for this vile tranſitory profit or pleaſure? O my deareſt *Jeſus*, thou knoweſt that *I* love thee; *I* beſeech thee, make that love victorious againſt thine Enemies and mine. *I* would rather die than deny thee for any intereſt in the World; and *I* hope thou wilt not deny me at the laſt day, but own me among thy faithful Servants. Lord, I ſerve thee not for nothing; great are the reaſons why I ſhould obey thee; thou haſt done much for me, and from thee I ſtill expect much, infinite rewards for ſuch due and poor ſervices: Lord, let me die before I deliberately ever ſin againſt thee, and forfeit thy love by falling from mine.

Thus, by Love I reſolve to conquer my ſelf, to deny and mortifie my luſts; by Love I will ſtrive to overcome all unlawful deſires, all ſinful motions; and then *I* ſhall rejoyce in the victory. It ſhall not make me either proud or peeviſh, or ſevere to others; but rather humble and meek, chearful and contented: ſo that it ſhall be ſeen by my outward deportment, how much pleaſure and tranquility my Soul hath inwardly; that I rejoyce in what I do for Chriſt; that it is delicious to me to deny my ſelf for his ſake, to oblige ſo great, ſo true, ſo generous a Lo-

ver

ver as *Jesus*, who hath done all acts of friendship for me, and owns me for his Friend. *I call you not servants, but friends; ye are my friends indeed, if ye do whatsoever I have commanded you*, John 13 14. Those that are accounted gallant Men in the World, will venture their lives to second a friend in an idle, an Unchristian quarrel; and their wounds they bear with courage, and count them honourable, *'Twas to serve a friend:* How much more should I rejoyce in that violence *I* offer to my appetites and unruly desires? In what *I* do or suffer for to please and serve my Heavenly, my best, my dearest Friend, whom *I* can never love so much as he deserves; and in loving of whom *I* am infinitely happier than if *I* should enjoy all the pleasures of sin, as long as *I* live. *I* only grieve and am displeased that *I* can do so little for him, that *I* can requite his love no better. *I* know that many Persons have done far more for their less deserving Friends, than *I* do, or can do for my Saviour *Jesus*.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXII.

A singular example of human Love, with a short reflection upon it.

"IT is reported by Greek Historians "of two loving Sisters, *Eudoxia* and *Irenea*, Daughters to the last unhappy "Prince of *Morea*, "who with his life lost "his Crown and "Country; that an "Uncle saved them from the general De- "solation and Captivity which soon suc- "ceeded the lost Battel, and carried them "to old *Andronicus* their Kinsman, then "Emperour of *Constantinople*. There, with "pity, they found a kind welcome, and "as great respects as they could wish. "Their beauty, their virtues and accom- "plishments surpast their Princely birth, "and were as eminent as their fortune "was low; so that young *Andronicus*, who "was to succeed in the Empire, was in "process of time taken with *Eudoxia*, "loved her passionately, and obtained the "Emperours consent to marry her. This "caused great troubles to *Irenea*, who liked "it well as she loved her sister, but could "not but grieve at it, as she loved the "Prince

Niceph. Greg. Chalco condilas.

"Prince (for unhappily ſhe had ſetled her "affections on him,) upon this ſhe fell ſick, "and almoſt to death; and it being ob- "ſerved that ſome diſtemper in her mind "cauſed the diſtemper of her body, her "Siſter proteſting of her love to her, aſſu- "ring her that *Eudoxia* ſhould have only "the title and the trouble, but *Irenea* the "priviledges and the power of an Empreſs, "conjured her to declare what cauſed her "diſcontent. Having underſtood what it "was and grieving that ſhe ſhould be the "occaſion of her Siſters danger and ſorrow, "ſhe preſently took from her head a Jewel "the Prince had given her, in form like "a Half-moon; and with it ſhe ſo wound- "ed and disfigured her face; that ſhe cured "the Prince of his love, as ſhe deſigned; "and afterwards retired to *Gallipoli*, where "ſhe entred a Cloiſter, and devoted the "reſt of her life to God. The Prince "finding in *Irenea* what he had loſt in *Eu-* "*doxia*, ſoon after entertained the ſame "paſſion for her, he had for her ſiſter; "but *Irenea* remembring her Siſters gene- "roſity, forgot her affection to the Prince; "conſidering what *Eudoxia* had voluntа- "rily ſuffered for her, how great, how "tender a love ſhe had expreſt in what "ſhe had done, reſolves to forſake *An-* "*dronicus*, to forego her eaſe and plea-

ſure,

"sure, and what she had so earnestly de-
"sired, rather than be ungrateful. Where-
"upon she steals away from the Court,
"goes to *Galliopoli*, enters her Sisters Cloi-
"ster, and having expreſt to her her love
"and acknowledgments, she takes the
"same Vows, and resolves to live and
"die to God, and with her beloved Sister.

This story makes me grieve and blush, that so little gratitude should be paid to *Jesus* for greater benefits, for that incomparable love he hath shewed men in dying for them; that I my self should for ill requite his much greater kindness, so poorly and imperfectly return his most wonderfull Love. What, shall I think it much to refrain my intemperance for his sake, who for mine fasted long and often, and tasted Vinegar and Gall? shall I think it much to mortifie my Pride and Anger for him, who for my sake despised the shame of the Cross, and returned nothing but meekness to the greatest provocations? shall I think it much to refrain my worldly, covetous desires for him, who for me became poor, naked, destitute of all things, though he were Lord of all? shall I think it much to deny my self some momentary sensual pleasures for him who carried my sorrows, who shed his Blood and was crucified to save me?

No,

No, my dearest *Jesus*, thy love hath overcome my heart, I will be no more what I have been, henceforth it shall be my wealth, my delight, my glory and ambition to serve and obey thee; give thee all possible demonstrations of a devout, a most passionate Love.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Some Scriptures to shew the necessity of departing from Sin, according to our Baptismal Vow; with some protestations to conclude this first Part.

THis Repentance and Reformation is what our Religion requires; The Scripture supposeth it in all that have embraced Christianity, and is earnest and pressing in its exhortations to it. *We beseech you Brethren, and exhort you by the Lord* Jesus, *that as ye have received of us, how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more; for ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord* Jesus; *for this is the will of God, even your sanctification*, 1 Thess. 4. 1, 2. Again, *But ye have not so learned Christ* (as to follow the greediness and lusts of the Gentiles:) *If so be that ye have heard of him, and have*

been

been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus; *that ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness*, Eph. 4. 20, 21. &c. And in another place, this change being absolutely necessary, is absolutely supposed to be wrought in us by our embracing the Christian Faith. *If ye are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above* ——— *for you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.* ——*Mortifie therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence and covetousness, which is idolatry;* ——— *in the which ye walked sometime when ye lived in them; but now, you also put off these, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, evil communication out of your mouth; lie not one with another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him*, Col. 3. 1, 2, &c. In these and many more places to the same purpose it is plainly implied, that true Christians are mindful and careful to fulfil their Baptismal promises, *To renounce the Devil and all his works, &c.* It is not

Love

Love alone that binds this duty upon us; our profession absolutely requires it of all that have given their name to Christ, and expect salvation from him. Love may enforce the obligation, and assist us to discharge it; but it is the design and the tenor of Christianity it self to reclaim us from sin; to sanctifie our affections, that our lives and actions may be holy as becomes the Gospel. *The grace of God which bringeth salvation, teacheth us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live in this present world soberly righteously, and godly*, Tit. 2. 11, 12. This is the sum of our duty; that we should be temperate in our bodies and minds, just and charitable in our intercourse with other men, and pious in our minds, devout in acts of Religion and Worship to God, the learning and practising this Lesson is that whereby the offered Salvation is obtained and laid hold on; that whereby we must make it appear, that we indeed own Christ for our Lord and Saviour, and that we do truly love him with all our hearts and souls.

Now therefore I must remember, that I am not my own, I am his that made and redeemed me; I am his to whom I have given my self, when I undertook *manfully to fight under his Banner against sin, the world and the devil.* To me is addrest that Exhortation, *Thou O man of God, flee these*

these things (ſtrifes, diſputes and covetouſneſs, before-mentioned) *and follow after righteouſneſs, godlineſs, faith, love, patience, meekneſs; fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life*, 1 Tim 6. 11, 12. I am become a Souldier of *Jeſus*; to me St. *Paul* ſpeaks as well as to *Timothy*, *Thou therefore endure hardneſs as a good Souldier of Jeſus Chriſt. No man that warreth entangles himſelf with the affairs of this life, that he may pleaſe him who hath choſen him to be a Souldier*, 2 Tim. 2. 3, 4. *If I* were in the Militia of any other Prince, *I* might endure hardneſs enough, before *I* could obtain his favour or indeed be taken notice of; heat and cold, hunger, thirſt and wearineſs, ſleepleſs nights and perpetual dangers; all this, and much more *I* might endure many years, and not be looked on; here my General hath prevented me with his kindneſs; he firſt fought againſt mine Enemies; he firſt loved me, and endured hardſhip for me; and he notes every thing *I* ſuffer for him, ſets it down, and aſſigns a reward to it. Under another Commander *I* might do brave actions, behave my ſelf valiantly, and yet not be ſeen: here my General hath always his eyes upon me, he encourageth me, and rejoiceth to ſee my fortitude; he is always ready to help me, and is moſt delighted

when he ſees me zealous and diligent. I might fight long enough for an earthly King, *I* could only get a poor ſubſiſtence, or an empty fame, but never ſo much as one Province of his Dominions: Here, fighting for my heavenly King, *I* ſhall get unvaluable treaſures, immortal glory, and a Kingdom which ſhall have no end; *To him that overcometh will I grant to ſit with me in my Throne*, Rev. 3. 21. I will therefore never again fight againſt the Captain of my ſalvation, and I will never forſake him; I will often renew my Vows, often ſwear Allegiance to him, upon that ſacred Blood which he ſhed for me, and which he gives me to comfort and ſtrengthen my heart; I will dayly think on thoſe things that may increaſe my zeal and diligence, and help me to reſiſt temptations; and I will ſuffer any thing, uſe all means poſſible to perform thoſe reſolutions, and approve my ſelf unto death, a lover of *Jeſus*. *If any man loves not the Lord Jeſus, let him be Anathema Maranatha.*

FINIS.

THE
Reformed Monaſtery;
OR, THE
LOVE
OF
JESUS.

The Second Part.

LONDON.
Printed for *Charles Brome*, at the Gun in S. *Paul's* Church-yard, the Weſt End, MDCXLIX.

LOVE
TO
JESUS

THE PREFACE.

I Have now gone through the greater half of my task, the negative part of our Baptismal Vow, and of our Duty. The greater half I call it, because our Nature stands not in æquilibrio, *in an indifference between good and evil, but is depraved and ill inclined; and the way to vertue will be smooth and pleasant, when once by grace and love we have renounced our sins, and our vicious propensities are both subdued and rectified.*

If therefore thou hast entred and liked this Cloister far, thou maist safely advance further, and go through what remains; if thou hast approved and observed its Rules hi-

therto, the rest cannot but be acceptable and easie to thee. As a Traveller in a strange Enemy Country meets with many hardships and dangers, but at home amongst Friends delights in journeying; so the Love of Jesus among the works of the Devil, the sinful lusts and vanities of this world, might meet with difficulties and a rugged way; but now conversing with Faith and good works, the holy will of God and his glorious rewards, it will proceed with joy, and a pleasant speedy progress.

I have called the Love of Jesus, The Reformed Monastery, partly to work upon thy fancy, that by thy Christian Profession thou mightest think thy self as entred into a new state of life, and cloistered in from loose Company and sinful enjoyments; and also to give thee to understand, that though thou beest not under any severe Monastic engagements, yet by thy being a Disciple and Servant of Jesus,

Jesus, *thou art bound to be strict and watchful over thy self; to use those remedies against sins and temptations, and those proper helps to Devotion, which are useful and subservient to Vertue and Religion, and will assist thee to secure thy duty and thy happiness. Old Heresies we know often revive and appear under a new dress; and it may serve the ends of true goodness and piety to diversifie Christian instructions, and to bring them forth under new and different forms. What one is not moved withal, may affect another; and the very novelty of a name or method may make that to be looked upon, which otherwise would pass unregarded.*

I know that I have fallen very short of what my Subject could bear; and perhaps some will think that I have not been full enough in my particulars, and in my directions; but my only design was to beget and entertain Divine Love in our Souls, well

knowing that that Love afterwards would ſoon enlarge our hearts and our knowledge, and guide us right in all caſes. If I can but teach thee, Reader, to love Jeſus with all thy heart, I am ſure I have brought thee into the eaſieſt and the only ſafe way to Heaven. "He hath "taught the beſt "part of Religion, "and to the beſt "purpoſe, who hath "taught others to "love it. And they certainly love it and obey it too, that truly love its Author the Bleſſed Jeſus. if we truly love him, we ſhall afterwards refuſe him nothing. Where a Man gives his heart, he will neither refuſe his hand nor his knee, neither ſervice nor worſhip; where he gives his Soul and affections, he will willingly beſtow all the reſt. God ſhall certainly command us, and all that we can diſpoſe of, without any reſervation,

Præcipuam Chriſtianæ pietatis portionem docuit, quiſquis ad hujus inflammavit amorem. *Eraſ.*

tion, if we ſecure our love to him. Therefore Love is called, The bond of Perfectneſs. *It is the only qualification can make us true Chriſtians* "*No other* "*vertue but may* "*conſiſt with ſome* "*ſin, Love alone* "*is contrary to all;* "*no other Grace can reſiſt all temptations, Love alone hath that unlimited power. Nothing but Love can enable us to diſcharge all obligations,* Love is the fulfilling of the Law. *All other gifts and vertues without Love cannot fit a Man for Heaven, nor make him dear to God; but Love can do it of it ſelf. Love* Jeſus *ſincerely and affectionately, and then you ſhall be ſure to live here to him, and hereafter with him to eternity.*

Alia virtus cum peccato, ſed dilectio tua omni peccato contrariatur, omni temptationi reſiſtit.

As there are Dragons that are bright and glittering, and have precious Stones in their heads; as there

are Comets that have the light and the elevation of Stars: so there are vicious Persons, false Christians, that are endowed with excellent parts, and are eminent in some vertues; but it profiteth nothing without Love. If I speak the tongues of Men and Angels (*saith* S. Paul, 1 *Cor.* 13. 1, &c.) If I have the gift of Prophesie, and understand all Mysteries; If I have all Faith, so that I remove Mountains; If I give my goods to the Poor, and even my Body to be burned, and have not Charity, I am nothing, and it profits me nothing, 1 *Cor.* 8. 1. *Of all other gifts and abilities it may be said, as of* Knowledge, *that they all* puff up, but Charity *alone* edifieth. Among those Creatures which stand and *worship before God, there is not only a Man and an Eagle, which may represent Persons of great Learning, fitted for high speculation; but also a Lion and an Ox, whereby Christians*

ſtians of meaner parts and knowledge are ſignified; for theſe are capable of Love as much as the others, and 'tis Love alone qualifies Men to dwell for ever in the embraces of the God of Love; for God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him, 1 *John* 4. 16.

"*God loves Men, that they may love him; and he only requires that they would love him, knowing that that love is of it ſelf, ſufficient to make them eternally happy. I have therefore all along fitted my Diſcourſe and Meditations to every Mans capacity and opportunities, as much as I could; becauſe all may love, and all muſt that will be happy. And though I may have recommend d ſome things as means and inſtruments: yet I have preſcribed nothing as a duty, but the*

Amat Deus ut ametur, nil aliud vult quam amari, &c. Aug.

great

great obligations which were laid upon us when we were baptized into Christ. So that in this Monastery all must enter and live, that would live in Heaven; and the Rules and Orders of it should be observed by all that desire to own Christ before Men, and to be owned by him at the last day. I might indeed have here inserted many, perhaps not unuseful directions, given by Ancient Fathers and Spiritual Guides, to such as made profession of greater Piety and stricter lives than others; but they could not have suted with all conditions and callings; therefore I have appointed no other Rule to those that shall enter this Cloister, *the Love of* Jesus *in a sincere obedience to his holy Precept, or a voluntary compliance with his Divine Counsels.*

Not that I would deny, that places for Religious Retirement might afford many great advantages, in order to greater devotion and heavenly mind-

odness

edneſs; for I bewail their loſs, and heartily wiſh that the Piety and Charity of the preſent Age might in a juſt and primitive meaſure reſtore to this Nation the uſeful conveniency of them. Neceſſary Reformations might have repurg'd Monaſteries as well as the Church, without aboliſhing of them; and they might have been ſtill Houſes of Religion, *without having any dependance upon* Rome. *All Men are not inclining to, nor fitted for an active life; ſome would be glad to find a place of reſt and retirement for Contemplation; ſome who by Melancholy, or by* the Terrors of the Lord, *are frighted from their ſins, and from the civilized World into Quakeriſm, into an unhappy Sullenneſs and*

Multi ſunt qui poſſunt Religioſam vitam etiam cum ſæculari habitu ducere, & plerique ſunt qui niſi omnia reliquerint, ſalvari apud Deum nulla tenus poſſunt. *Greg. M. ad Matur. Imp.*

and Apostasie, would perhaps exchange their Silks and Laces for the courser Garments of mortified Professors of a Monastic life; and find among them, that happiness and peace of the Soul, which they vainly seek for, in their wretched and deluded Brotherhood. Some who, upon great afflictions and sudden changes of fortune, fall into a state of sorrow and tedious sadness, and are left in the world to struggle with the temptations of a discontented Mind, would perhaps take Sanctuary in a Religious House; and give themselves up wholly to Jesus, and forget their temporal sorrow by Heavenly joys and meditations; and at last bless that storm and shipwreck which cast them into that unknown Land of rest and safety. Some, that are forward and ready to promise well, and take good resolutions, have not strength enough to keep them, but are prevailed upon, by the importunity of those temptations they

meet

meet withal in the converse of Men; they perhaps being fled from those occasions of sin, might, by the good example and good instructions of a Religious Society, secure themselves, and stand to their holy engagements. Some who never loved the World, or that are grown weary of it, or have passionate longings for Heaven, would willingly free themselves of the cumbrances and distractions of worldly business, to enjoy the leisure and opportunities of Meditations, Devotion, and other Spiritual exercises. And some that are much taken with the strict Lives, and Beads and Orisons of Papist-Friers would look home and spend their commendations on the purer Religion, and better ordered Lives and Devotions of those, in this Church, that should wholly devote themselves to God. However, tis not to be denied, but that Men are much affected and influenced by the place, the company, the way of living, and

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the outward circumſtances wherein they are engaged; and I believe, it might be now as true a Proverb as ever, Benè vixit, qui benè latuit, *He lives beſt and moſt ſafe, who is leaſt acquainted with the World, and lives fartheſt from it.*

I might add further, that ſuch pious Foundations or Reſtitutions, might be ſo ordered, as to afford a very great advantage to our Church and Religion. For thence Perſons of good Parts and great Piety, devoted to the advancement of the true Chriſtian Faith, and free from thoſe cares and cumbrances that are upon others, might be ſent as Miſſionaries, *to make it their buſineſs to reclaim perſons of all ſorts from Schiſm, Errors, and Hereſies, and even from Looſneſs and Irreligion.*

Not but that we have an abundant ſupply of Perſons very well fitted for that bleſſed employment, from our great Seminaries of Learning. But

their

their neceſſary attendance upon their Miniſtry and particular Cures, beſides others avocations, deprive them of the leiſure and opportunities of running after their ſtrayed Sheep. They can well guide and feed ſuch as duly keep within their folds; but ſuch as break out and wander, they have not time to ſeek after. And yet great is the number of theſe, eſpecially about great Towns; where ſmall encouragements, and ſtiff oppoſition are a great hindrance to the gaining of Converts: This excellent and charitable work could be beſt done by them that ſhould have nothing elſe to do. But firſt, let every one work out his own ſalvation, and make ſure work for himſelf, that will beſt enable him to work upon others.

But though we want ſome conveniences for withdrawing from temporal affairs, to mind Eternity and our Souls the better; yet we muſt go to Heaven; wherever we live, we muſt live

live to God, that we may live with God; therefore if we cannot have a material we must have a Spiritual Cloister, which may defend us against temptations, and guide and assist us in doing our duty. Such an one is The Love of Jesus; *it will protect us against all dangers and spiritual Enemies, better than the strongest Walls of any Abby; and will make us devout and zealous in Gods service, beyond what the exhortations of the wisest Abbot could do.*

Clauſtrum ubique portate interius. *Norb. ab præmonſt.*

"Dum creſcit fortitudo amoris "interni, infirmatur fortitudo "carnis, *whilst love is strong the "flesh is mortified, and its lusts are "subdued,* Greg. Mag. Amanti "nihil eſt difficile, nihil impoſſi- "bile, *Love can do all things of it "self, it passeth over all difficulties, "and there is no obstacle which it "overcomes not.* Auguſt. *Love can*

supply

ſupply the want of all outward helps and advantages; let it but be our care to ſecure Love, and it will ſecure us. Let us therefore feed and entertain it by reading and meditation, by frequent Prayers and acts of Love, and by obſerving and taſting how gracious the Lord is in all his works; All things in Heaven and Earth do inceſſantly cry to us, that we ſhould love God. *God* draws *us after him*, Hoſ. 4. 11. with cords of a Man, with bands of Love; *therefore by Love we can beſt follow him*, 1 John 3. 18. *But*, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth; and hereby we ſhall know that we are of the truth, and we ſhall aſſure our hearts before him.

Cœlum & terra, & omnia quæ in eis ſunt non ceſſant mihi dicere, ut amem Dominum Deum meum. Aug.

THE

THE

Reformed Monaſtery;

Or, The LOVE of

JESUS.

CHAP. I.

That Love obligeth us alſo to fulfil the poſitive part of our Baptiſmal Vow; with a proteſtation of obedience to it.

MY former diſobedience and rebellions againſt my bleſſed Lord and deareſt Maſter, I have examined and bewailed; I have conſidered that by ſin I wound and crucifie him afreſh, and therefore have reſolved to ſin no more, never to lift up hand or heart againſt him. But will Love be ſatisfied with this? is it

a ſufficient demonſtration of Love, not to abuſe, not to injure a friend? No ſure, I muſt proceed further; Love requires more than this. I muſt not only abſtain from what would anger him I love; but I ſhould further do that that will pleaſe him. 'Tis part of my duty, as it was of my vow, not only *to renounce the Devil and all his works*; but alſo *to believe all the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, and to keep God's holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the ſame all the days of my life.*

As for the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, I believe them from my heart, and reſolve to own and confeſs them whilſt I live; I never will diſpute or object againſt them, and I hope, I could chuſe to die before I would renounce any of them; as for other leſs neceſſary Doctrins, I will be guided by my Spiritual Governours; in Controverſies, I will ſubmit to the judgment of that Holy Church, in whoſe Communion I live; and ſo *I* will read and ponder Gods holy Word, eſpecially the New Teſtament, that I may know my Maſters Will, and be encouraged to do it; not that I may find out new Myſteries, and maintain the private opinions of a party. It remains then only, that I ſhould *keep Gods Holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the ſame all the days of my life.* And this

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I also undertake; it shall be my daily and constant study and endeavour; *I* resolve to obey to the utmost of my power: And *I* also promise further to manifest my love by Free-will-offerings, as God shall enable me.

But first, my Love is to appear by doing what is commanded; *This is the love of God, that we keep his Commandments* (saith St. *John*, 1 *John* 5. 3.) and *he that hath my Commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me* (saith our Blessed Saviour, *John* 14. 21.) There can be no love without obedience, this is its first and chiefest Trial, *If a man love me, he will keep my words*, ver. 23. Now then, should my Beloved Lord ask me, as once he did St. *Peter*, N. N. *dost thou love me?* would not my heart answer, with his zealous Apostle, *Yes Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee*; ——— *I would lay down my life for thee*, John 21. 15. and 13. 37. Now to this he replies again, *if thou lovest me, keep my Commandments*, John 14. 15. Every time we tell him, *Lord, I love thee, thou knowest that I love thee*: He doth answer again, *If thou lovest me, keep my Commandments*. So that without we observe this, we can no ways pretend to love him.

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I am therefore to take notice of, and to amend ſins of omiſſion, which too too many, among Chriſtians, mind little, or not at all. In the matter of ſobriety I am commanded, whether I eat or drink, to do it, as all things elſe, to the glory of God; and to be contented, whatſoever ſtate I am in; for chaſtity, I am commanded to know how to keep my veſſel in ſanctification and honour; for acts of corporal and ſpiritual mercy, I am commanded to be merciful, as my heavenly Father is merciful, and to forgive injuries, as I deſire my ſelf to be forgiven; for reverence to my betters, I am commanded to honour and obey my ſuperiours Eccleſiaſtical and Civil; in what concerns Divine Worſhip, I am bound to read and pray, and meditate, to inſtruct my ſelf and Family, to receive the Bleſſed Sacrament, to have a veneration and reſpect for all things that belong or relate to God, and him to love and fear, and truſt and adore evermore. All theſe, with the particulars included in them; and all other duties, and the ſpecial Precepts of the New Teſtament, is the task I chearfully undertake, and in the performance whereof, I will prove my ſelf a ſincere lover of *Jeſus*.

Chap.

CHAP. II.

How great a happineſs in Eternity follows our Love and Obedience.

His yoke is eaſie, and his burthen light; his Commandments are not grievous, and yet *in keeping of them there is great reward*; a temporal happineſs, than which none is greater in this World? and an eternal happineſs, infinitely greater than any this world can afford. Do not I ſee what pains moſt men are at to get a ſubſiſtence for this World? how they run and ſweat, and ſpend themſelves to provide for this periſhing life; which is yet miſerable, ſhort and uncertain? and ſhall *I not labour for the meat which abideth to eternal life*? Shall I be at no pains to ſecure that life which hath no end, and knows no miſery? O that I could duly underſtand the difference betwixt this life and the life to come! how would I ſlight the one, and deſire the other? or rather, how chearfully would I employ this preſent, to obtain that which is to come? Is not there ſervants which work hard day by day, a whole year together for ſmall wages, who are almoſt perpetually employed about their Maſters

 buſineſs;

business; and yet have sometimes no thanks, and often but a sorry reward; and am not I one of those labourers whom my Lord hath hired to work in his Vineyard? *Mat.* 21. Am not I one of those Servants whom he hath intrusted with his goods, to whom he hath intrusted Talents to improve for him; and do not I desire he should tell me one day, *Well done, thou good and faithful servant*? Mat. 21. Is not my salary great, greater than any Prince on Earth could make it, greater than I could wish, greater than I can comprehend; eternal rest, eternal joys, eternal happiness, eternal glories; Eternity it self, he himself will be my reward. Eternity! Eternity! Eternity! Blessed Eternity. Eternity never enough to be considered; Eternity never enough to be valued, shall I obtain thee by what I do here for my Lord? shall I obtain thee by that imperfect service I pay to my gracious Master? *O God who hast prepared for them that love thee such good things as pass mans understanding, pour into our hearts such love towards thee, that we loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.* Lord I am not worthy

Sixth. Sund. after Trin.

to

to be called thy Son; I have often beg'd to be one of thy hired Servants, the meaneſt, ſo I love and obey beſt. O let me, like thy Servant *Moſes*, ever *have a reſpect to the recompence of the reward*, ever conſider what I ſhall get by ſerving thee, that I may be diligent, perſevering and chearful in doing my duty. O my Soul, bluſh to conſider how laborious men are for the unſatisfying acqueſts of this Earth; how eager thou haſt been thy ſelf in purſuing of them; how ſlothful, how unactive and heavy thou art in working for eternal Reſt, for the treaſures of Eternity, for the glories of Heaven, for thoſe Divine Pleaſures which are at the right hand of God for evermore. Whence comes this, unhappy Soul, is it not from inconſideration; becauſe thou doſt not lift up thine eyes to ſee whether the way of Love and Obedience will bring thee; becauſe thou doſt not look beyond the World, upon things eternal; becauſe thou doſt not often enough meditate upon Heaven and Eternity; that unvaluable, infinite recompence which awaits thee, as ſoon as thy work is finiſhed. Reſolve therefore to amend this, and daily, once at leaſt, to conſider what are thy wages, what thou ſhalt get by ſerving God. As the Apoſtle ſays of afflictions, that they *are light and but for a*

moment, whilſt we look not at the things which are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen: the ſame we may ſay of the moſt difficult of Chriſtian duties, that *they are light, and but for a moment,* that they are eaſie and ſoon done; that there is no tediouſneſs, no hardſhip in them, whilſt we look upon things eternal, whilſt we *have a reſpect unto the recompence of the reward.*

CHAP. III.

That to win our hearts and duty God propounds great rewards to us.

THis conſideration doubtleſs would be powerful and effectual, would wake and ſtir us up, and make us active and lively, if we had it often in our minds. Therefore our Bleſſed Saviour, to encourage his followers and make them diligent in his ſervice, doth often give them to underſtand, what by parables and what by plain declarations, that they ſhould not ſerve him for nought, and that they ſhould be no loſers by him; that he would conſider them for their time, for their expences, for their ſufferings, and for their labours; that he would take notice of the leaſt thing they ſhould do for him; ſo

that

that even a *Cup of water* given for his sake should not go unrewarded; and that their reward would be great, bountiful and most excellent, far above their deserts, and even above their wishes and apprehensions; an Angelick nature, a glory bright as the Sun it self, an eternal life, an heavenly, and endless kingdom, his own joys should be their portion and their recompence. And we find also the Holy Apostles, assuring those whom they brought to work in their Lords Vineyard, that they should certainly have their hire, and be paid most generously for their work; *God will render to every man according to his deeds, to them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality* shall be rendred *eternal life*, Rom. 2. 6, 7. *Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour*, 1 Cor. 3. 8. And St. *Paul*, to encourage the *Corinthians*, tells them, that we Christians are entred into a race, at the end whereof we may see the Laurel, *palmam in stadio positam*, a glorious prize, an incorruptible Crown, if we will run and strive for it, 1 *Cor.* 9. 24. and he likewise tells the *Ephesians*, that *whatsoever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free*, Eph. 6. 8. St. *Peter* also teacheth, that we should be moved and

encouraged, by the greatness of the promised reward, to forsake our lusts, and wholly devote our selves to God; *exceeding great and glorious promises are given unto us, that by these you might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the pollution that is in the world through lust*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. *Christ is become the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him*, Heb. 5. 9. And so the result of all these may be comprehended in the exhortation of St. *Paul*; *My beloved Brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord*, 1 Cor. 15. 58. In this sense good works are meritorious, in that they procure us a reward, a reward infinitely greater than their own desert. *Let us not* therefore, as the Apostle exhorts, *be weary in well doing, for we shall reap in due season if we faint not*, Gal. 6. 9. Let us compare together the returns of vice and vertue, how unlike are the fruits of them; and let us bear this short saying in our minds, *If we do ill the pleasure is soon past, the grief and punishment abide long upon us; if we do well, the trouble is soon ended, the joy and reward of it remain for ever.* Let us pray with St. *Paul*, *The Lord direct our hearts into the love of God, and the patient waiting for Christ*, 2 Thess. 3. 5. who when he comes,

comes, brings his reward with him; and to this, let us add this Collect of the Church; *Grant us grace, O Lord, so to follow thy blessed Saints in all vertuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys which thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord,* Amen.

CHAP. IV.

That Love hath a secret pleasure, and reward in it self; with a Meditation to that purpose.

BUt, though it may encourage us to love that gracious God who gives so very much for that little we are able to do, yet Love it self is not mercenary; *Charity doth not seek her own,* (saith St. *Paul* 1 *Cor.* 13. 5.) we may desire our promised reward, and set our affections upon it, as it is a demonstration of Gods infinite love and goodness; or because it will be the expressing of our duty and thankfulness when we shall love, and glorifie and adore God perfectly and for ever; or rather because the reward is God himself, who will be to every faithful servant his *exceeding great reward,* Gen. 15. 4. as well as to faithful *Abraham*; rewarding sincere obedience with the fruition of himself, being

all in all to his Saints. But still I say, Love is not selfish, but free and generous, if nothing were to be gained by it, it would have great satisfaction in shewing it self; the work and labour of Love is a noble pleasure to a pious heart. When he thus reflects on his obedience, and thinks with himself, by the performance of this duty, by this act of vertue I serve my dearest Lord, I oblige my best friend; I express my love to him whose infinite kindness to me hath conquered my heart, whom I love as my own Soul, to whom I wholly give my self, and for whom I desire both to live and die.

O happy Soul, who feelest what an exceeding joy it is to love *Jesus*! or rather unhappy Soul, who canst shew so little love to *Jesus*! Unhappy necessities of a frail body, unhappy distractions of a troublesom world! Why am I, by you deprived of the continual pleasure of waiting continually on my Divine and most loving Master? But blessed be my gracious Lord, that I might have more opportunities of pleasing him, and expressing my affections to him, he hath made vertues of necessities, he hath turned Nature into Grace, and of human Duties he hath made acts of Religion. In relieving mine own and others wants, if I observe the Rules of sobriety

briety and charity, he takes occasion thence bless and reward me, as if he were thereby glorified. In discharging the duties of my place and calling, if I am diligent and faithful; though my work be never so mean, he owns it as a service done to him. *Servants* (saith St. *Paul*) *obey your Masters in all things, and do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to Men, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ*, Col. 3. 22, 23. If I am conscientious in all my ways and works, he takes it as a mark of my love and part of my duty to him. O that the constant course of my conversation might speak the sincerity of my affection to my blessed Lord. Dearest *Jesu*, the Cross thou didst bear for me was heavy and painful to extremity; but thy yoke is light and pleasant, thy service is perfect freedom. O let it be my delight and daily employment, as it is my duty, to serve and obey thee, to follow thy blessed Example, and be instrumental in winning hearts to thee. Let me love thee so entirely that I may love nothing but thee, nothing but for thy sake.

B. Anſel.

Hæc precor Domine, me gustare per amorem quod gusto per cognitionem, sentiam per affectum, quod sentio per intellectum. Amen.

CHAP. V.

Reflections on the vanity of temporal things; with some holy resolves and ejaculations.

COnsider, O my Soul, how deceitful, how vain is this present world; how inconstant and unsatisfying; how vexatious and troublesom. Doth not thine experience tell thee, that the more thou lovest the best of earthly things, the more crosses and sorrows befal thee? the more thou enjoyest of them, the more weary thou art, the farther from happiness and true contentment? I have observed that the dead are soon forgotten, and that the world neither can, nor indeed takes care to do any thing for its greatest slaves and admirers after they are gone; and yet our greatest toil and vexation is to live here, so as to please the world. We are not pleased to have our wants supplied, and to be free from pain, except the world be pleased also. That imaginary life which we live in the account of others, is by far the more troublesom and the more uncertain; for we are never well except others will think us to be so. But, O my Soul, why dost thou cumber thy self

self with so many things, even with things that have no existence but in thine and other mens fancy? *One thing is necessary*; love God, and seek his heavenly Kingdom, and thou art rich and happy to the full.

Let thy thoughts wait one while on the most prosperous sinners in the world; how empty is their Soul, how distracted their Mind, how restless their Conscience? Do they not live in a storm and hurry, and at last sink into the Grave with the greatest regret and bitterness? and what would they not give in the day of Vengeance, that they might pass from the left to the right hand of the Judge? Consider and tremble, with what amazement and impotent rage they will struggle to change their place, that they might change their doom! But now turn and follow the Just. See their inward peace and their secret joy; what comfort they have in their afflictions? what hope in their lives; what undaunted assurance in their death; but who can express those endless pleasures, those ravishing joys wherein they enter, when they come to enjoy and see him face to face, whom here they loved and sought after? O my deluded heart, be not deceived by vain appearances; that is certainly true which shall be true at last, and shall remain unchangable to eternity!

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If it be so, that indeed thou must die, and one of those two states must be thy portion for ever; then put on now those affections, which thou shalt certainly entertain when thou shalt be near to expire; look upon things now as thou shalt at last, and it will make thee wise, and make thee see the Truth naked; *For that is certainly true which is true at last, and all other appearances are but varnish and illusion.*

Dwell seriously upon this Consideration, and it will make thee clearly see, that true wisdom is to love and fear God, and the greatest happiness to live under his protection; to be in his favour, *whose loving kindness is better than life.*

That one Consideration well weighed will make thee understand that there is no great worth or pleasure in those lusts and vanities thou didst renounce, when thou becamest a Christian; that thy Vow was only the renouncing of thy greatest misery. 'Twill make thee understand, that it was no great hardship thou didst undertake, when thou promisedst to serve God, and be a Souldier of *Jesus* under the Banner of the Cross; that 'twas only the obliging thy self to be truly happy, and to enjoy perfect Freedom.

And now my Soul, considering that of necessity thou must either by sin serve the Devil,

Devil, and destroy thy self; or by vertue and piety serve God, and gain eternal Bliss; what shouldst thou do, but entirely devote thy self to thy Blessed, thy best Master? Breathing out Heaven-ward such Ejaculations as these:

My dearest Lord, I was once brought and presented to thee, when through the waters of Baptism I past into thy Family, and became thy Servant. Lord, I do here repeat the same oblation, and now again yeild my self to be thine. Here I do from my heart disown and bewail all those acts of mine, whereby at any time I have disowned or displeased thee; could the shedding of my blood recal or expiate them, I could freely pour it out and die.

Wherein soever I have behaved my self as if I were not thine, I here, what I can, retract it with regret and sorrow. Lord, pity my weakness, and pardon my folly, and let me be received again into the number of thy Servants. I am ready to do or suffer any thing thou shalt please, so I may still belong to thee. O let our first contract, my Baptismal engagement stand, notwithstanding my breach of it. I resolve now to mind and observe it better; assist me sweet *Jesu*, and let me ever live to thee.

Lord,

Lord, now I as heartily yeild up my self to thee, that I may love and obey thee; as I shall when I die, that thou mayest save me. I had rather serve thee than be the greatest Prince on earth; I had rather obey thee, than command all Mankind; I prefer thy favour to all the Riches of this World; I had rather suffer and even die for thee, than without thee to have all the pleasures and the joys of this life. Lord, I will love and serve thee for ever.

CHAP. VI.

That Christ having bought us, hath now a just title to our Love and Service.

LOVE regards not so much what is commanded, as who it is that commands it; if it be the Beloved requires any thing, Love doth it chearfully without reluctancy; another with earnest begging should not have that granted, which the least word of a Friend shall obtain. The commands of Christianity are easie and most rational, in keeping of them consisteth our present and future happiness. Yet the true lover of *Jesus* looks further, he considers that it is his Lord and Saviour who would have him obey; he to whom

whom he belongs, to whom he owes himself, and infinitely more; for every Christian owes *Jesus* to *Jesus*, who gave himself for him. The old saying was *Emendus cui imperes*, Buy your slaves; buy those that will be commanded by you; none of us can say so to the God whom we serve, for he hath indeed bought us; *Ye are not your own* (saith St. *Paul*) *but ye are bought with a price*, thence it is strongly inter'd, *therefore glorifie God in your body and in your spirit, which are Gods*. We are not at our own dispose, our Divine Master hath a most just propriety in us, we are wholly his; and would to God we were his as much by affection and resignation, as by right; the price he hath paid for us is no less than himself; he hath given his life, that ours might be his: *We were redeemed from our vain conversation, by the precious blood of Christ, who died for us, that we might live to him*. He could get nothing by that dear purchase, but our love only, for we were his before, since he that made us; only we had estranged our selves from him and placed our love on other things, and he could not count us his own while we loved him not.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

How much we are engaged to serve our Blessed Lord, with renewed Promises to do it faithfully.

I Must therefore consider whose I am; I am Christ's by a strong and incomprehensible title; while I serve him I do that proper work which belongs to me; whilst I obey what he hath commanded, I do what is infinitely my duty, what his love to me challengeth, and what my love to him desires to return. Had I Ten Thousand years to live, and could I serve him all that while and do nothing else, I could not repay him for the least part of that great ransom he hath paid for me, neither could I deserve any thing of those great wages which he will give me; but my life is but short, and he allows me time for other things, for pleasure and recreation. I have therefore a most gracious Master, and therefore I resolve and promise to do what he requires of me; I will except at nothing he commands, it shall be my joy to pay my duty to him; I will make it appear that I serve out of love and affection. O my deareſt *Jesus*, would my heart did feel what it should; would

would I could expreſs what it feels; and would *I* could perform as much as I expreſs.

Qui viget affectu, non gemit imperio.

But, O my Bleſſed Lord, how frequently and unhappily do I forget that thou art my Maſter, and I thy Servant; that my chiefeſt buſineſs is to do thy will; and that my greateſt happineſs, as well as duty, is to obey thee? Is it not becauſe I alſo forget that thou didſt redeem me from a moſt wretched ſlavery? that thou didſt pay an Immenſe price for me? that thou becameſt a Servant for me, before thou requireſt any ſervice from me; and that thou didſt firſt love me before thou didſt entreat my love? O thou great lover and Saviour of men, I wholly give my ſelf to thee Body and Soul, Heart and Affections; I deſire to be thine; I pray that thou wouldſt make me to be thine, and that thou wouldſt own me for thine, that ſo thou maiſt be mine to eternity. *Wouldſt thou know* (ſaith St. Aug.) *what thou muſt give for Heaven? Give thy ſelf, that is the price; nothing leſs will ſerve, that alone is accounted ſufficient: Heaven is worth juſt what thou art,*

Aliud non quæris pretium niſi te ipſum; tantum valet quantum es, te da & habebis illud. Manual.

art, give thy self and thou shalt certainly have it.

Do not Men seek to serve and oblige great persons, expecting to be by them gratified? Are they not ambitious to wait upon Princes in regard of an honourable stipend? and why should I not count it the greatest honour and preferment to serve the King of Kings and Lord of Lords; the salary he pays his servants is infinitely greater than any the greatest Monarch can give; they oftentimes cast off with disgrace their most faithful Officers: My Lord is so far from so doing, that he bears with the faults of his meanest Servants, & never turns out any that will live with him. 'Tis highly difficult to become a Prince's Favourite, many spend their time, their wealth, and themselves, and never can get the least share in his affections; but I am sure my heavenly Master loveth me; I know it by what he hath done, by what he daily doth, and by what he hath declared he would do for me. Although he hath bought me, and so might well require the utmost I can do without any reward; yet he hires me and gives me more, infinitely more than I can earn or claim. I will therefore be diligent, faithful and zealous in fulfilling the work he hath appointed me. I will often say to my self;

I am

I am a Servant and a lover of Jesus; *a servant and a lover of the Blessed* Jesus. I will every morning consider; what can I do this day of what my Lord hath commanded me? what duties of *sobriety, righteousness* or *godliness*, can I discharge to make it appear that *Jesus* is the Master I own and obey? *None of us liveth to himself, and no man dies to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lords; for to this end Christ both died, and rose and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.*

CHAP. VIII.

Meditations to excite us to a sincere and fervent Love.

O My Soul, whither canst thou fly for to be secure and at rest? Thou dost converse with snares and temptations; thou art taken up with cares and concerns that come to nothing! whither canst thou retire to be free from dangers? what place of leisure canst thou find, wherein thou maist secure thy duty and thy happiness?

The Love of *Jesus* must be thy refuge; thy *Claustrum Animæ*, a Cloister or shelter for

for thee to dwell in, and be ſafe. Thither retire under *the banner of Love*, Cant. 2. 4. and there thou ſhalt want neither protection nor encouragement. *Ye that love the Lord, hate evil; he preſerveth the Souls of his Saints: he delivers them out of the hand of the wicked. Light is ſown for the Righteous: and gladneſs for the upright in heart*, Pſal. 97. 10.

Conſider what Love hath done for thee; and thou ſhalt eaſily believe that it can do much upon thee. Love, like active Fire, turns all things into its likeneſs. It veſted the moſt perfect God with thy fleſh and infirmities: Becauſe reſemblance begets love, God would become like thee, that thou mighteſt love him. And if thou wilt entertain and follow the Love of *Jeſus*, it will make thee become like him; if thou *wilt walk in love as he walked*, Eph. 5. 2. it will make thee eaſily follow his footſteps, and arrive to its perfect happineſs. *Behold how great, how wonderful a thing is Love! Its power and perfection cannot*

Omne agens & omne amans vult ſibi paſſum, & amatum aſſimilare.

Ne etiam ſimilitudo deeſſet amori, ecce immortalis, mortalis factus eſt.

Ὁρᾷς τὶ ἀγαπητὸν, πῶς μέγα καὶ θαυμαστόν ἐστιν ἡ ἀγάπη,

cannot be uttered; we want words for to express them.

καὶ τῆς τελειότητος αὐτῆς οὐκ ἔστιν ἐξήγησις. Clem. Rom.

In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him, 1 John 4 9. *He made thee with a word; but to save thee he wrought many wonders, and suffered many pains.*

Qui te totum & semel dicendo fecit, in reficiendo & dixit multa, & pertulit dura. Betu.

The Jews, when they saw him weep for dead *Lazarus*; *Behold*, said they, *how he loved him!* when thou seest him shed, not only Tears, but his Blood also, dying that thou maist live; wilt not thou say, behold how he loved me! and then my Soul, what canst thou do, but return love for love! It is easie, and it is profitable, and it affords the greatest of pleasures, to love him who thus loved thee.

If by a hearty sincere love thou canst dwell in the bosom, and approach the heart of thy dearest Lord, there thou shalt find the sweetest rest, the purest joy, the best of instructions, and the greatest helps and encouragements to perfect holiness, till thy happiness be perfect. If with an unfeigned affection thou canst daily repeat

peat these few words, which have been frequently in the mouth of some devout persons, *I love thee dear* Jesus, *I love thee dear* Jesus! thou hast learned that which will teach thee both to live and die well. Then thou wilt value nothing, not life it self, but so far as it is subservient to love; and thou shalt be so far from being afraid of death, that thou shalt wish with a primitive Saint, it were in thy power to die many times for *Jesus*.

Οἷα ζημιοῦμαι μὴ δυνάμενος ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ πολλάκις ἀποθανεῖν. God. in S. Basil.

A devout love for him, will make thee find that true peace and satisfaction, which the world with endless labour vainly seeks in earthly enjoyments. It will make thee say (but without fear of change or disappointment) with the rich man in the Gospel; *Soul eat and drink, be merry, take thine ease, thou hast much goods laid up for many years*, Luke 12. yea, for eternity.

Worldly Men, as though they had a Dropsie, the more they drink out of their broken Cisterns the more they thirst, the more unsatisfied they remain; but they that love and fear God, lack nothing; they drink living waters out of that Fountain which is never dry; they have him in their Souls, with whom true peace and

and felicity is ever enjoyed. *O fortunatissime, cui quod amas, domi est!* O happy Soul, that art possest of that which thou lovest! thou hast enough at home to make thee intirely happy, without ever seeking abroad.

O my Soul entertain that blessed Guest, which instead of being chargeable, will discharge thee of all thy wants and fears, and troublesome burthens. Love will strengthen thee against temptations, and secure thee from sin, it will deliver thee from the terrors and bondage of the Law, and bring thee to the rest and freedom of the Gospel-yoke. As it self grows on towards perfection, so will it still increase thy happiness till its consummation.

Poterant leges delicta punire, conscientiam munire non poterant. Lact.

Brevis differentia inter legem, & Evangelium, timor & amor. Aug.

But my Soul, suffer not thy love to be fantastick, and to spend it self in thoughts and wishes; the expressions of Love are obedience and submission, with a devout life. *Whoso keepeth his Word, in him is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him,* 1 John 2. 5.

Princes

Princes have many Flatterers, and but a few Friends, *Jesus* also with many pretenders, and but a few lovers. Multitudes wait upon him in Mount *Gerizim* to receive his Blessing; in *Sinai*, where he gives his Law, he hath but few attendants; and fewer yet in *Golgotha*, where he himself suffers, and calls us to take up his Cross. Therefore my Soul, by obedience, self-denial, and an humble patience, justifie the sincerity of thy love and protestations. Follow now thy Saviour by Love, and a sincere imitation, and thou shalt certainly come to see his face, and to dwell with him in glory; *for where he is, there shall his servant be*, John 12.26. *They that be faithful in love shall abide with him*, Wisd. 3.9.

CHAP. IX.

Christianity absolutely requires our Love and strictest Obedience.

THis double duty of dying unto sin and living unto righteousness, abstaining from that which is evil and doing that which is good, I am obliged to perform by strong and indispensable obligations; if I do not I certainly perish. When we say in common speaking, that we do things

things out of Love, we mean that we are free, and may chuse whether we do them or no, we are not bound to it; but here all along where I undertake to discharge the duties of Religion out of love, I do not in the least mean so. I acknowledge my self under the greatest necessity of discharging my Baptismal Vow, of living according to the Gospel Rule, otherwise my neglect of it would be my ruin, I should perish in my disobedience. Love it self is a duty, *the first and greatest Commandment; thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind,* Mat. 22. 37. I recommend Love therefore as the noblest, the most powerful motive to a Religious obedience; as that which makes our duty easie and pleasant, and gives a value to what we do or suffer for God. I know there are those who teach, that by our well-doing we must not seek for salvation, and that our obedience is not required to our Justification, but may be a mark or an effect of it, Faith having done the work before; but this groundless and mischievous opinion is contradicted by thousands of plain express Scriptures; *He that heareth these*

Meliores quos dirigit amor, plures quos corrigit timor. Aug.

sayings of mine and doth them not, is like the man that built his house upon the Sand. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven. If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments. And innumerable others, with all those that affirm, that God shall judge and reward every man according as his works have been.

No, the holy Religion we profess requires a conformity betwixt the Holy *Jesus* and his Followers; that by a devout imitation we should copy his Example; that we should be fruitful in good works, and by a sincere and universal obedience serve God all the days of our life: *For if the word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a full recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation,* Heb. 2. 2, 3. by being disobedient to our Lord *Jesus*, who having wrought and revealed it, offers it to us on the condition of an affectionate obedience to his Gospel? *The earth which drinketh the rain that cometh upon it——and beareth thorns and briers, is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burnt*; such is their condition, who receiving the Heavenly dew of Divine Grace in their admission into, and profession of Christianity,

nity, yet still remain barren, or bring forth evil fruit. *But beloved* (saith the Apostle) *we are perswaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation; for God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed towards his name; and we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end*, Heb. 6. 7. &c. He says not, we desire that you may be confident and perswaded of your salvation, but that by love and diligent obedience ye may ascertain your hope, *make your calling and election sure*, as St. *Peter* speaks, 1 Pet. 1. 10. for indeed, *God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him*, 1 Thess. 5. 9. 10. in holiness of life, *worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called*, Ephes. 4. 1. *for we are Gods workmanship created in Jesus Christ unto good works, which God hath ordained that we should walk in them*, Ephes. 2. 10. This then is the way wherein of necessity we must walk, that as we engaged and promised when we were baptized into Christ, so we should live ever after; which St. *Paul* expresseth thus, *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him*, Col. 2. 6. and again, *walk wor-*

thy of the Lord, being fruitful in every good work, Col. 1. 10. This is the Rule whereby we must order the course of our lives, that *our conversation be as becomes the Gospel of Christ*; that *our conversation be in Heaven, whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ*, Phil. 1. 27. and 3. 20. that *whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, any vertue, any thing praise-worthy*, Phil. 4. 8. may be our constant study and practice. We must labour, *that whether present or absent we may be accepted of our Lord, because we shall all appear before him, and receive according as we obey him, now in his absence*, 2 Cor. 5. 9.

CHAP. X.

Considerations to encourage us in the discharge of our Christian duty; with a Caution to the Reader.

ALL this, and much more to the same purpose, which I have read and observed in the Sacred Books of the New Testament, hath convinced me that it is the design of Christian Religion to make me meek and humble, sober and contented, just and charitable, devout and religious, vertuous and holy; this I own to be my duty,

duty, and I will endeavour my self heartily to perform the same. And that I may do it with chearfulness and affection, I will stir and quicken the holy fire of Love in my heart by pious considerations. When any duty to God or Man calls upon me for action and performance, and I find in my Soul too much of dulness or reluctancy, I will again by meditation suppose my dying Saviour present, telling me, how much he hath done and suffered for me, and desiring me, as I love him, to do that duty which lies before me. "Christian if "thou dost understand the greatness of my "love which brought me here to die for "thee; if thou art sensible of it, and "wouldst make any return for it, do this, "obey this command; this may be the "last thing thou shalt ever do for me, "this may be the last tryal of thy love. "Sure it would grieve thee to have denied "this small request to him that gives "his life, that gives himself for thee. Or else I will suppose my self in the presence of my Divine Master, sitting on his heavenly Throne with his glorified Servants about him, shewing me the Crown he hath assigned to me, and saying; "N.N. "Wilt thou deny to do this at my earnest "request? wilt thou be so unkind to me? "Sure I have deserved better at thy hands;

"ſure I, who am much above thee, have "done much more for thee than that comes "to; but beſides, I would highly recom- "pence thee. Theſe my Friends I have "rewarded with the bliſs and glory they "enjoy, for having done ſuch things for "me; and I would reward thee as boun- "tifully. Here is eternal life, eternal "reſt, eternal glory for thy recompence, "as thou loveſt me, as thou loveſt thy ſelf, "obey, that thou maiſt be happy. To this, what anſwer could I make, but ſuch as this? Lord, not only this, but any thing elſe thou haſt commanded, I am willing to fulfil and obey. I bewail my dulneſs and depraved nature, that makes me ſo unready, ſo unactive in thy ſervice; but Lord thou knoweſt that I love thee. I would undertake any labour, any trouble to make it appear; I would die to juſtifie it. Yet, ſweeteſt *Jeſu*, I beg of thee to increaſe my love; to increaſe it to ſuch a degree, that, like thy Heavenly Attendants, I may burn with that Divine fire, and be all love to thee; that ſo I may be always prepared and deſirous to do thy will. *Stir up we beſeech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people, that they plenteouſly bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of*

Sund. 25. after Trin.

of thee be plenteously rewarded through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Christian, I would here advise thee, before I pass further, That thou wouldst not judge of several things in this Book by the present liking of them. Devotional things are discerned more by the affections than by the judgment, the relish of them doth depend upon the temper of the Soul: And so those resolves and meditations which now, it may be, please thee not, may hereafter be very acceptable, when thou art otherwise disposed; to be sure when thou art ready to leave the world, and enter thy portion of Eternity. If now therefore thou wilt bring thy mind to such a frame as then it will be in, I need not fear but that what I have writ, thou wilt also read and repeat heartily in the first Person; for to that end I have thus contrived it to engage thine affections, to make thee speak, as of thy self, these Soliloquies, acts of Love, and acts of Resolution which run throughout the whole discourse. It may affect thee much, and to good purpose, frequently to confer with thy Soul, and with thy Saviour, about thy duty and thy happiness. However be sure that thou beest serious and sincere: For certain it is, that for thee N. N. by name, *Jesus* was crucified and died; and

certain it is, that thou thy self shalt die and be judged, and rise again to an intolerable Eternity, if by carelesness and inconsideration thou hast been unmindful of thy Lord and thy Soul; or else rise again to eternal Joys, if thou hast sincerely loved and served *Jesus*. *If ye keep my Commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Fathers Commandments, and abide in his love*, John 15. 10.

CHAP. XI.

That Love will prompt us to free-will Offerings, and thinks it never doth enough.

THus much of necessity must be done; my duty as well as my love constrains me to it. Not to break negative Precepts and to obey positive ones, that is, to cease from sin and to work righteousness,) is required of me; if I do it by love, I have made my task pleasant; but yet a task it is which must be fulfilled. Not but that there is mercy for sins against the New-Covenant, for the transgression of Gospel Precepts; there is joy in Heaven at the conversion of a sinner, whatever his sins have been; and it ought greatly to endear us to God, that he is so willing to forgive, so desirous to have us repent, that

we

we may be capable of his pardon; but whether soon or late, whether after crying guilts or ordinary sins, still I say, there must be a true contrition, a sorrow and repentance for our sins, proceeding from the love of God, and a sincere endeavour to please and obey him for the future; and so thus far we are drawn by a moral necessity, by the desire of our own happiness, which is not to be obtained any other way. But shall we stay just here, and not go one step further than is required? 'tis well indeed when we are safe, and that must be secured first of all, and with the greatest care; but shall our love proceed no further? Sure that Christian who is best assured of his salvation, will love God most of all, and make to him the greatest and most hearty returns. When a Man is qualified for Heaven, and enjoys the greatest happiness this world is capable of; that is, a sense of Gods favour, and a well grounded assurance of a future bliss, his Soul cannot but melt into the most affectionate love for that gracious God, whose mercy and loving kindness hath brought him into that happy condition, and fitted him by his grace for a much happier; they, I say, that are in such a case (for they only can be capable of what I now treat of) may well do something more, than

what needs they muſt; may well enlarge their affections to God beyond the bounds of preſcribed duties. It is a good ſign, a ſign of a ſincere and a pious heart, when a Man is forward to undertake for God; when he doth not weigh grains and ſcruples, leſt he ſhould part with any of his right and liberty; but affords God a full meaſure and running over, and thinks he never gives enough, and ſtill deſires that he might do infinitely more for him. 'Tis true, that properly ſpeaking all is due to God; and the more any the beſt Chriſtian returns, the more he hath received, and ſo the more he is indebted; but yet, God is pleaſed not to require all that he gives, nor all that we may give, that we may have wherewith to make a free-will Offering; that we may have ſomething to give him that he requires not, tokens of our greater love and gratitude. It was foretold, that under the Goſpel, *in the day of Chriſt's power, his people ſhould offer him free-will Offerings with an holy worſhip*, Pſal. 110. 3. And *David* himſelf, under the Law was at his *quid retribuam*, *What ſhall I render unto the Lord for all the benefits that he hath done unto me?* *Pſal.* 116. Though the benefits which God vouchſafed his People then, were much inferior to them he hath ſince beſtowed upon us;

(*for*

(*for eye had not then seen, nor ear heard, neither was it entred into the heart of Man, what great things God would do for them that love him,* as he hath now declared in the revelations of his Gospel, (though he had tied them to a burthensom and most expensive service; yet he accepted their voluntary vows and engagements, and was well pleased with them; yet he would receive their free-will Offerings, and delight in them. And sure we are more obliged than the Jews, to let out love and gratitude break forth beyond the limits of Commands and expres Injunctions; and now that God hath opened to us his rarest Treasures, his own bosom, for to give us his beloved Son, he will not reject our free Oblations, the voluntary acknowledgments of his undeserved and unspeakable mercies. 'Tis not to be denied (without giving the Lie to the learning and piety of the best Christians in all Ages) but that there is in the New Testament Counsels as well as Precepts, some things recommended, tho' not commanded. He that sells all that he hath for to buy *the Pearl of great price*, and they that make themselves *Eunuchs for the kingdom of Heaven*, were not enjoyned so to do, but are well approved of; and that God, who gives a plentiful harvest to him that sows bountifully, 2 *Cor.* 9. 6. is doubtless

well

well pleased with his open handedness and charitable profusion. And as it is the best indication of a devout and loving Soul, chearfully to exceed what is strictly required; it is also the best fence to immure and secure our duty; for then when we slack and abate, we may be still within our due bounds. Nay more, I am confident that as it is best and safest, it is also easier to give free will Offerings, than only just to pay the daily commanded Sacrifice, because those proceed from affection, these perhaps only from injunction. A Friend desired to go one mile, goes two or ten, and finds his way pleasant, because Love leads him, but he that is prest to the same Journy, and is acted by fear and compulsion, while he resolves not to go one foot farther than needs he must, will easily be tempted to stay one short of what he should.

But this is better understood by the devout lovers of *Jesus*, than I can express it.

Οὐ μόνον τὰς ἐντολὰς ἐφύλαξαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ δῶρα προσήνεγκαν τῷ Θεῷ. *Beat. Doroth. Doct.* 1.

"Precepts are given to "all Men as Tributes "are exacted of all; "(saith an Ancient "Guide of Souls) but "as in the world great "Persons and Favo-"rites not only pay the tax, but also "offer

"offer presents and gifts to the Prince:
"So in the Church, the most Religious
"observe not only the precepts, but also
"Intimations and Counsels, and give to
"God not only what he exacts, but also
"free oblations, all that they are able.
How many thousands of Saints, now in Heaven, have taken this course? how many that now wear the bright Crown of Virginity, might have enjoyed the comforts of Marriage, had not the Love of *Jesus* prevailed over their natural desires? how many who might have possest great Estates, enjoy now the greater Treasures of Eternity, for having made themselves poor, to relieve the needy Members of *Jesus*? how many who now sit on Thrones of Glory, have chosen here to follow *Jesus* in meanness and humility, when honours and worldly pomps were at their command? how many are now rewarded with high degrees of everlasting Bliss, for having devoted their whole time upon Earth to the service of the Blessed *Jesus*, when they might have spent more of it upon their profit or pleasure? and how many now living aspire to the same felicities and recompences by chearfully following the same Ways, and expressing a sincere and unbounded love, by such free oblations?

Cur non possum quod isti & ista? S. Aug. Why cannot I do what these my Christian Brothers and Sisters have done, and do still? hath not God done as great things for me as for them? hath he not given me the same promises as they had? do not I hope to be their companion and fellow Citizen in Heaven? and why then cannot I love as much as they did? I should therefore, and do resolve to make no reservations; *Jesus* shall have the command of all he hath given me, of all he hath enabled me to do; I shall keep nothing from him which may express my love and gratitude, and do him service.

Deareſt *Jesus*, I know I can never do for thee so much as I should, and I know that I shall never do so much as I would; thou gaveſt thy self for me, and thou wilt give thy self to me; and Lord, what am I worth, and what is the worth of all I can do? It is a great favour that thou wilt accept of me and my weak endeavours. I know that if Heaven were capable of any grief, it would be only that we have not loved thee upon Earth with greater affection; when thou filleſt our Souls with thy divine ravishing Joys, we shall wish we had done nothing here, but serve and love thee. O give me grace now whilst I live, to do what I shall wish

to

to have done when I die; let me do now I am absent from thee, what I shall wish to have done when I dwell with thee; let me love thee infinitely and without measure. *Modus amandi. Deum sine modo S. Bern.*

An offering of a free heart will I give thee, and praise thy name, O Lord, because it is so comfortable, Psal. 54. 6.

CHAP. XII.

That our obedience to the Church, is an excellent expression of our love to Christ.

THE first instance of our Love in this way of free-will Offerings, should be a pious obedience to our Mother the Church; not but that it is many ways required, but because 'tis almost wholly neglected. What by pride and refractorines, what by ignorance and indevotion, and what by looseness and irreligion, that obedience which ought to be paid to *those that have the rule over us in the Lord*, to the standing rules and orders of our Spiritual Governours, is so generally laid aside, that many that would, yet dare not press it upon the people; and that, even they that

that obey, do it secretly, and, as though 'twere dishonourable, are in a manner ashamed to own it. Hence comes that great neglect of Confirmation, that most necessary and ancient, if not Apostolic constitution; hence the desuetude of fasting upon appointed days, and even of bidding of them; and the non observance of Holy-days, and times of solemn devotion; hence the slight regard had to the publick worship of God, and the seldom receiving of the Lords Supper; hence the reservedness and unhappy secrecy of most people, in not acquainting their Spiritual Guides with the state of their Conscience when it needs, and not receiving their comforts and directions; hence the not sending for the Elders of the Church to do their office upon sick persons, and the seldom desiring their absolution; and hence even in too many of the Clergy, the neglect of daily saying Divine Offices, as they are commanded, and observing other Injunctions peculiar to them. I may say, that it fares with our Church as with some Princes, who have their due Sovereignity denied them, because they are Christians; (as if by becoming Members and Defenders of the Church, they were become subject to Pontifical Chairs and Puritan Synods) for so many would not have

this

this Church obeyed, because 'tis reformed; they would not have its Laws observ'd because it makes them inferior to Gods; as though, by not imposing a blind superstitious and over severe obedience, as *Rome* doth, this Church were become uncapable of exercising any authority over her Children, and requiring any duty from them. But I say, let those that love *Jesus* amend this for his sake; for the Church is his Spouse and hath received her power from him; let them yield a free and religious obedience to Ecclesiastical Injunctions, for his sake who hath said, *he that receiveth you receiveth me.* It is doubtless our duty so to do; and I am sure it will be a good token of a pious heart when we shall obey them in the Lord, whom the Lord hath set over us. We shall make it appear, that we own the Authority of our Heavenly King, when we are subject to those his Officers, by whom he now reigns over us; to whom he hath given the Keys of his Kingdom, and whom he hath appointed Stewards of his saving Mysteries; we shall have a right, and a share in the Mysterious representation of the great expiatory Sacrifice which by the Church is celebrated in the Eucharist, and in those Divine Services and solemn Prayers which the Church offer to God daily; and we shall

shall receive the full benefit of being Members of the Church, and holding Communion with it. If this were not absolutely required, yet I am sure it will be a very acceptable free-will Offering, if we do it devoutly and joyfully, because we love *Jesus*; and this Christian obedience to the known, rational, and pious orders of the Church, will answer the best part of that ancient and so much magnified self abnegation, vowed by the Cœnobites, when they gave up themselves to be in all things ruled and commanded by their Superiors; and it will exercise those two Heavenly graces, Meekness and Humility, which the world despiseth, but all true Christians own to be the most Divine; as they that bring *rest to the Soul*, Mat. 11. 29. and make us more conformable to the meek and humble *Jesus*. Solomon *knew the true Mother by her love to the Child*; *and the true Child of God may be known, by his love and duty to his Mother the Church.*

CHAP. XIII.

Of several voluntary Oblations.

AS for corporal Austerities commanded or uncommanded, I have said some-

something of them already; and the chiefest use and design of them is to mortifie sensual *Lusts*, and to keep under the Body, that the Spirit may rule and be obeyed; yet as they are exercises of Repentance, marks of the just indignation we conceive against our selves for having displeased God; as they may effect or express a distrelish of temporal Pleasures, a longing for heavenly Joys, and an endeavour to take up our Cross and follow *Jesus*; they may be the matter of a free-will Offering, and they may find a gracious reward and acceptance, insomuch as they proceed from a sincere love to *Jesus*. Prayer also, thanksgiving, reading, meditation, acts of Religion; though, as to the substance, they be the discharge of the greatest duty God requires of us, the worship and adoration of his Divine Majesty; yet, as to the quantity, they may become free oblations, the expressions of a greater Love. He that with devout affections enlargeth his offices, or counts the frequency of them by Canonical hours and wilht for opportunities; and he that sets apart large portions for Religious exercises, or in the following of his necessary business, doth often lift up his heart and thoughts to Heaven and heavenly things, makes a voluntary offering

ing of some of his time to him, of whose Eternity he hopes to be partaker. He that defalks some hours from the refreshment of his Body, to bestow them upon his Soul; he that chuseth a meaner condition and employment, that having fewer avocations, he may spend more time upon Religion; and he that bears with some wrongs and injuries, that being free from the distractions of Quarrels and Lawsuits, he may be the better disposed to serve God, hath bought the blessed opportunity of attending *Jesus*, and endearing himself to him. Charity likewise, whether Spiritual or Corporal, whether in giving or in forgiving, may be carried further than is absolutely required, and so become a free Oblation. He that takes great pains to instruct the ignorant, to convert sinners, by all means to win Souls to *Jesus*, may manifest a greater love than was absolutely necessary to his own salvation; and he that makes it his business and delight to prevent quarrels, or make reconciliations; to comfort and defend the afflicted and oppressed, to visit Hospitals and relieve the Poor; and to spend all his substance in pious uses for the honour of God and Religion, and for the present and future happiness of men, may exceed what God would have rewarded, and by shew-

ing so great a love, enrich his Crown of glory and recompence. I only mark the Head-springs of Store-houses of those arbitrary gifts wherewith Men may honour God and enrich themselves; the several eminations and offerings which may proceed from them, being free and innumerable, cannot be specified, and should not be imposed. Where there is love, there is a willing mind; and 2 *Cor.* 8. 12. *where there is a willing mind a man* (in other cases as well in Charity) *is accepted, according to what he hath and not according to what he hath not.* "Some "husbandmen sow, "that they may have "wherewith to pay "their Debts, (which "marks the labours "and offerings of Pe- "nitents, who endea- "vour to make what satisfaction they can "for their injuries to God or Man.) Some "sow, that by the expected crop they "may increase their wealth; (which re- "presents the good works of more inno- "cent persons, who aspire to a great re- "ward and a glorious Crown.) Some sow, "that they may have something where- "with to express their gratitude, and "make presents to their kind Landlord or "Be-

Εἶδον παρὰ γεωργοῖς ἓν σπέρμα παρ' ἀμφοτέροις, &c. St. Johan. Clim. Grad. 26. §. 43.

"Benefactor; (whereby is signified the "best of Christians, who in all things "seek and design the glory of their "Lord.) And others sow, that they may "be thought diligent, and receive commen- "dations from the passers by; (these are "an emblem of the most imperfect Chri- "stians, who in Gods service seek their "own glory, and of whom our Blessed "Saviour says, that they have their re- "ward.) However all must sow; and eve- ry one as he doth it, sparingly or boun- tifully, so shall he reap at last: But Hea- ven is a cheap purchase, give we never so dear for it. "The

Decay of Christian piety.

"Gospel reveals and "offers a glorious "Kingdom, great and "eternal Felicities; but he that expects "their possession because he reads and be- "lieves them, is like him that should fan- "cy the whole world should be his, be- "cause he hath the History or the Map "thereof.

Chap.

CHAP. XIV.

The true notion of Free-will Offerings vindicated, with an Exhortation to abound in the work of the Lord.

HEre it may be proper to insert the caution of an ancient Rule. "Be sure "thou first observe that which is com- "manded, before thou "dost aim at Coun- "sels. Neglect not a duty because thou dost *offer freely*, and art over zealous in other things. Thus the covetous Worlding gripes and niggardly detains, because he designs to build Alms-houses at last; and thus the factious Zealot breaks the second with the first table of the Divine Law; making Religion an excuse for his uncharitableness and disobedience. But if we love Jesus with hearty affection, we shall be far enough from thus mocking God, and deceiving our selves; for Love, that doubles upon us all obligations of duty, doth also oblige us to these free-will Offerings. They are not amends for our omissions, or exchanges in lieu of our obedience; but they are the fulfilling of that

Cupiens divinum adimplere consilium, ante omnia serva mandatum. Athan.

Law

Law of Gratitude we now live under. The infinite Mercies of the Gospel, put upon us infinite obligations to do in requital for God, all that possibly we are able. But the Gospel is a Law of liberty, all its extent and measures are not in all particulars minutely and expressly designed.

So then by these free-will Offerings, we must not understand any thing like Supererogations, or things to which we are no ways obliged; or that exceed what God hath done for us, or what he will reward or that are done without his help, *without whom we can do nothing*; any of these Notions is impious, and implies a contradiction. But by them is to be understood the expression of our acknowledgments, and of that love we owe infinitely, in things not expressly commanded, and not under a necessity. *Of such* (saith the Apostle) *I speak not by commandment, but by occasion, and to prove the sincerity of your love*, 2 Cor. 8. 8. They that like the *Macedonians have first given themselves to the Lord*, may well with them be willing to offer to God, to their power, and beyond their power. To this purpose St. *Paul* saith of himself, that his preaching the Gospel of Christ was altogether his duty, and wo unto him if he fulfilled it not; but his doing it willingly for nothing in the Regi-

ons

ons of *Achaia*, for that *he had a reward*, and that was *his boasting* and *his glorying*, of which no man should rob him. To this purpose also, the ancient Fathers have said many things. That some good works we do *verius virtutis amore, liberaque electione, quam ulla omnino legis coactione*, rather by a free choice and love, than by precept. That thus to do things for God beyond express commandments was highly acceptable, and highly rewarded. That to abstain from that which is evil, is absolutely required; and farther to deny our selves for Religions sake, is a free oblation. And much more to the same purpose is frequenly to be met within those true and devout lovers of the Blessed *Jesus*, whose affection and gratitude to him, nothing could fully express or confine.

Ἃ μὲν γὰρ ὑπὲρ τὴν ἐντολὴν γίνεται πολὺν ἔχει τὴν μισθὸν κατὰ τοῦτο. Chrys.

In illicitis cavere jugum necessitatis est, permissa vincere munus arbitrii.

And now by these, and first by Holy Scripture it manifestly appears, that the true notion of free-will Offerings, in nothing favours human pride, or derogates from Gods glory: Can the Beggar merit or presume any thing, if he throws away

the dirt in his hand, for to receive Gold? and if with *David* we pour out to God, that water we thirſted and might lawfully have drunk, that we may more largely drink the water of Life, which God freely gives us, ſhall we therefore exalt our ſelves?

Let us then endeavour by all means to make it appear, that we are ſenſible how infinitely we are obliged to love and ſerve *Jeſus*. *Let us not*, as the Son of *Sirach* adviſeth, *conſult with a coward in matters of war*; conſult with an irreligious Age in matters of Piety and Religion; and let us not think it enough to do it as the moſt do. When firſt the Chriſtian Faith was preached in the world, and men underſtood what Chriſt had done for them, and what he had promiſed, they thought nothing too much, nor too good for him. They chearfully parted with temporal pleaſures, honours and riches; with their liberties, their limbs, their blood, their very lives, that they might be faithful to *Jeſus*, and come to reign with him. They made it appear by their patient, chearful, and magnanimous ſuffrings, that they valued nothing but *Jeſus* and Eternity. We are not now expoſed to the ſame dangers for the profeſſion and belief of Chriſtianity; but we make our love and zeal appear by

by our contempt of the world, and aspiring after Heaven; by our charity to men, and abounding in the work of the Lord; by keeping the Commandments, as well as dying for the Creed; the same Lord and Saviour that requires our Faith to the one, demands our obedience to the other. And now, if we spend our time in the hearty observance of our Lords Precepts and intimations, in doing and enlarging our duty to the utmost of our power; if we thus *confess him before men* by living to him, then are we prepared to die for him, and he will certainly own us as much as if we had. Our Crown this way may be enriched, and our Love shewn and perfected, as well as by the flames of Martyrdom. And, O happy we! that we can come; and more happy yet if we do come, to sing Alleluiah, and eternally praise our gracious Redeemer with the noble Army of Martyrs; where the love we had here shall fill our hearts with divine joy, and be increased to the proportions of our endless and unspeakable Bliss. *The Lord direct our hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for* Jesus *our Master*, 2 Thess. 3. 3.

Ubi tota virtus erit, O anima videre quod amas, & summa felicitas amare quod vides. Aug.

I need not here insert Cautions against Vain-glory and Self-complacency after we have done the most we are able; for if it proceeds not from the Love of God, it is nothing worth; and if it doth, it will never bring pride nor vanity. *Charity vaunteth not it self, and is not puffed up*, 1 Cor. 13. 4.

Εἰ καὶ μυρίους θανάτους ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ ὑπομείνομεν, &c. *St. Johan Clim. Grad.* 23. 11.

Only in the words of a pious Saint; If we "had died a thousand "times for *Jesus*, yet "we should not have "repaid him the least "part of what we "owe his infinite mercy and condescen-"sion; for vast is the difference betwixt "the Blood of God, and the blood of "his Creatures and Servants, if we judge "according to the dignity, and not to the substance of it. *What hast thou that thou hast not received?* Remember what *Jesus* saith to all Christians, *He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth Son or Daughter more than me, is not worthy of me*, Mat. 10. 37. and *whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple*, Luke 14. 33. We cannot do too much for *Jesus*, but we may easily do too little; though the most we can do will never merit Heaven, yet the least shall not

not obtain it; 'tis safe and impossible to exceed, but 'tis easie and dangerous to be defective.

O God, who hast prepared for them that love thee such good things as pass mans understanding, pour into our hearts such love towards thee, that we loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises which exceed all that we can desire, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen. Sixth Sunday after Trinity.

I have now assigned Love its full task; to repent and mortifie our lusts, to serve and obey God, and to abound in good works, even Free-will Offerings. I have no more for it to do; I would only have it to increase, to grow towards perfection, to be constant, and to endure unto the end. To help this forward, I have here added a meditation on the exaltation of our Blessed Saviour; some useful directions for the ordering of our lives; and four concluding considerations, whereby to assist, direct and encourage the sincere Lover of Jesus, in the discharge of this great and blessed duty, *the work and labour of Love.*

Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works, Heb. 10. 24.

CHAP. XV.

Meditation on the Exaltation of the Bleſſed Jeſus.

LIve and reign ſweeteſt *Jeſu*, for ever! My deareſt Lord, I heartily rejoice in that great power and glory to which now thou art exalted. When I conſider what thou didſt do, to reſcue us from miſery and to make us happy; how thou didſt lay by thy glories to intitle us to them; becameſt poor to pay our debt, becameſt weak to die, and to vanquiſh our enemies; When I conſider this, I cannot but admire the greatneſs of thy charity, whereby thou wert moved thus to relieve and ſuccour us in ſuffering, and abaſing thy ſelf. I cannot alſo but be tranſported with joy, that in thy conflict with our enemies thou didſt obtain the victory, and therby a Kingdom that ſhall have no end.

Ita ne ſummus omnium, unius factus eſt omnium, quis hoc fecit? amor, dignitatis neſcius, dignatione dives, affectu potens, ſuaſu efficax: quid violentius? triumphat de Deo amor. Bern.

Lord, if thou hadſt periſhed in our quarrel, if death had ſtill detained thee, what

what grief; what remedileſs anguiſh had it been to our Souls; not only to ſee our hopes fruſtrated, but alſo to ſee him oppreſt and overcome with ſo much pity and generoſity engaged for our deliverance! But thou liveſt, deareſt Lord, thou art triumphant, thou haſt got the keys of Death and Hell. Thou art the Head and Saviour of the Church. Thou art the Judge of all Men. Thou art the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords. Thou ſitteſt at the right hand of the Majeſty on high, above all principalities and powers. All power is given to thee in Heaven and in Earth. At thy Name, O Bleſſed *Jeſu*, every knee muſt bow; and that we do moſt willingly, gladly acknowledging that thy Name is exalted above every name. Thou alone haſt redeemed, and haſt power to ſave us. Thou alone haſt the might and right to command us. Unhappy they that will not worſhip thee, and ſubmit to thy government. Unhappy they that impart thine honour to created beings, and will not wholly depend upon thee.

Bleſſed be God that we have a Saviour, whom without Idolatry we may love and worſhip; to whom we may offer our humble Petitions, and at whoſe feet we may proſtrate our ſelves. Bleſſed be God that

he himself would become our Saviour Had an Angel or Man been able and deputed to work our Redemption, our love and gratitude might have been excessive, and provoked God to jealousie. But now Blessed *Jesu*, we cannot humble our selves too low before thee, we cannot exalt thee; we can never exceed in paying our acknowledgments to thee. *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Unto him* therefore *that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God, and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever*, Amen. *Rev.* 5. 12. and 1. 6.

Blessed Lord, I rejoyce that thou hast the disposal of me; I willingly submit my self to thy good pleasure, both to obey and to suffer; I desire that my heart and all my affections may wholly be subject to thee.

O, why is thy name dishonoured? thy Church persecuted? thy holy Religion despised, or perverted? and thou thy self rejected and rebelled against, even by many of them that have sworn Allegiance to thee; O, that it were in my power to advance thy Kingdom here, among my Fellow-Servants; to bring all Men in subjection

jection to thee. But first, my Blessed Lord, let me sincerely submit to thy Will, in all things. Let never one of my words or actions send thee that impious message of the rebellious Citizens; *We will not have this Man to reign over us*, Luke 19. 14. but now thou art absent, I beseech thee, let me observe thy Laws, and own and reverence thy Power, in them to whom thou hast imparted thy Church and Ministers. Thou art my King; dearest *Jesu*, let me never see that hour, that I shall not heartily love, and humbly obey thee.

Consider, O my Soul, how great is the happiness and honour to be one of the retinue of so great, so good a Master. Let nothing cast thee down; thou shalt certainly reign above, if thou art faithful here below.

Jacob and his Sons were in fear to perish with hunger; because they knew not that *Joseph* did reign in *Ægypt*; but my timorous heart, why shouldst thou fear any thing, when thou knowest that *Jesus* doth reign in Heaven? God hath *given him power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life*, to all that will sincerely give themselves to him. If thou art his, thou canst not want to be protected, and provided for. All his Servants are certainly prefer'd; all his Souldiers come to be

Kings; the Crown of life, the Kingdom of Heaven, the glories of Eternity, are the recompences laid up for his humble Subjects.

Live and reign, ſweeteſt *Jeſu*, for ever. When I do conſider that Legions of Angels, Millions of Bleſſed Souls, perpetually adore thee with the greateſt extaſie of love and divine joy; that all pious Men throughout all the world, expreſs their love and gratitude by daily worſhipping and obeying of thee; that all thy wicked enemies are ſeiz'd with fear and trembling before thee. When thus I ſee thee, Bleſſed Lord with the eyes of my Faith, on the Throne of the higheſt Majeſty, encircled with glory and power; I then diſdain the world, and am raiſed above my ſelf, tranſported with pleaſure, to ſee thy labours and ſufferings thus juſtly rewarded; to think that mine for thee ſhall have the ſame reward, according to the utmoſt of my capacity.

And now, my gracious Lord, this I make my requeſt; if I can add nothing to thy higheſt glory, yet let me enter in, and partake of thy joy; for *they that love thy name ſhall be joyful in thee*, Pſal. 5. 12.

Chap.

CHAP. XVI.

Two general directions about the manifesting of our love to God.

IT is a Maxim in Morals, *quod (or non facit, non fit*, what the Heart doth not, is reputed as not done; it can deserve neither praise nor reward; and it can signifie nothing to any purpose of vertue. Now the Heart is the fountain of humane affections, and the seat of Love; so that the meaning is, that what is not done out of love is insignificant and wholly unacceptable. Which truth holds in Religion also; God earnestly requires the heart of all his worthippers, and without it, he doth accept neither their services, nor their oblations. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul; and these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart*, Deut. 6. 6.

Love therefore must carry us through the whole course of our lives, through all our duty; that our actions bearing its stamp, and signature, may be pleasing to God, and to us profitable. So, that in the discharge of our several callings; in our intercourse with others at home or abroad; and in the most common actions of our lives, still we must act, as being acted by a sincere love to God. it is one of the best of those ancient Rules which were

were given to Aſcetick perſons; "Let Charity which abides for "ever, influence and "govern the uſe we "make of time, and "other tranſitory "things; Let it go "along with us in all "our ways and we "ſhall certainly go right. But this, like other general Rules will ſignifie nothing, except it be applied to particulars. My love to *Jeſus* muſt appear in what I do this day, and what I ſhall do to morrow. The juſtice and charity of the words I ſpeak and the work I am about, muſt juſtifie it, that indeed I own *Jeſus* for my Lord, his Goſpel for my Rule, and his love for my comfort and encouragements. Let *Charity, which abides for ever, direct us in our uſe of tranſitory things.*

In omnibus quibus utitur tranſitura neceſſitas, ſuperemineat quæ permanet charitas. Reg. Aug.

It is the advice of ſome Spiritual directors, that we would ſingle out ſome one eminent Chriſtian vertue to the ſtudy whereof we ſhould more particularly addict our ſelves, and examine our growth in Grace, by our proficiency in it. This may be much for our eaſe and for our advantage. For the Duties and Graces of our Religion are very numerous not to be attained and attended to all at once and

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as they ſtand together; whereas if we make choice of any one ſingle, which leads us to all the reſt, and includes them all, our Chriſtian advancement will be with greater ſpeed and leſs difficulty, and we ſhall be Maſters of all other vertues, by having bent our ſtrength and endeavours on the practice of one. Such a one, I am ſure, is the love of God, the love of the Bleſſed *Jeſus*, which if well followed and attended to, will bring us to the higheſt perfection to which any Chriſtian can arrive in this life. Let it therefore be our chiefeſt care to beget and entertain in our hearts that moſt bleſſed Love; and then, to expreſs and perfect it by theſe two general Rules.

1. In all our actions to have reſpect to God's Will, and to ſeek to fulfil it rather than our own. This is recommended to us by the Example of our Bleſſed Saviour, who profeſſed that *he came not to do his own will, but the will of him that ſent him*; and this was his great *demonſtration of love* to the Father. *That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment even ſo I do; ariſe, let us go hence,* John 14. 31. He would go and deliver himſelf into the hands

Probatio dilectionis exhibitio eſt operis. Greg

hands of his Crucifiers, rather than not comply with that order he had received from God his Father. And thus if we chuſe God's Will where it is moſt contradictory to our own deſires, we ſhall make it appear that indeed we love him. *Abraham* was called the Friend of God; and God bare him witneſs, that he indeed feared God, when in obedience to the Divine Commandment he would have ſacrificed his beloved *Iſaac*; and if we ſacrifice our will to God, to act in all things according to what he hath revealed; to ſquare our actions, great or ſmall, according to the Rules he hath preſcribed to us, then God will be certified that we indeed love him; our readineſs to obey his pleaſure will ſpeak the heartineſs of our affection.

We ſee how readily Courtiers conform themſelves to the humor and pleaſure of their Prince; and ſhall we think it hard to conform to what God hath required of us; our Obedience being our greateſt profit here, and our infinite happineſs in the world to come? Sure 'tis no difficult matter to ſay with that great lover of *Jeſus*, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Act. 9. 6. And if Love hath diſpoſed us to ſay it, 'twill be eaſie enough to do it afterwards.

In the ſecond place, as we muſt ſet our hand

hand to that Prayer we ought to say daily, *Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven*; so must we also submit our necks to it. I mean, that in compliance to the will of God we must give up our selves, as well to patient sufferance, as to cheerful obedience.

One of the great advantages the Coenobites had in their Communities, was the casting out those two words, which are the seeds of Contention and the disturbers of the world, *Mine* and *Thine*; and if we resign all to God, who is indeed the true Proprietor, we shall bear the loss of any thing without repining against him; we shall never differ with him about that which is not our own; we shall have peace with him whatever we suffer. *God is the Judge, he setteth up one, and bringeth down another.* All things that happen are ordered by his infinite power and wisdom; therefore in all, let us rejoice in his Government, and with a chearful submission humbly bow and worship, and say with his Saints; *Alleluiah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; let us be glad and rejoice and give honour to him,* Rev. 19. 6.

If we truly love God, we shall as willingly suffer any thing from him, as we would for him; perswaded that it is for our

Æquius eſt ut nos ejus, quam ut ille noſtram ſequatur voluntatem. Aug.

our good, we ſhall not only remain ſatisfied, but thankful alſo. I am ſure 'tis much more reaſonable we ſhould follow God's Will, than he ours. And ſome have ſaid, that it is better and more acceptable to God, to ſuffer afflictions patiently, than in proſperity to do the beſt of things.

Perfectius eſt adverſa tolerare patienter, quam bonis operibus inſudare.

Let us therefore in all our ſorrows, humble our ſelves and look up to Heaven, and ſay; *Calicem quem dedit Pater; The Cup that my heavenly Father giveth me, ſhall I not drink it?* We ſhall always proſper, and have all things at wiſh, and command all events, *as one did the winds and the weather*, In vit. *Patr.* if we by love adhere to God, and make his Will our own, *He that hath, and ſeeth all things in one, may always remain ſatisfied, and have true peace in God.*

Magna res eſt amor; magnum omnino bonum, quod ſolum leve facit omne oneroſum, & fert æqualiter omne inæquale; nam onus ſine onere portat, & omne amarum dulce ac ſapidum efficit. Thom. de Kemp. The guilty priſoner dreads every noiſe, and trem-

trembles when the door opens, for fear of his deſerved doom; when on the ſame accounts, the innocent is both calm and joyful, expecting to be delivered. Now, guilt and the higheſt Treaſon before God, is to love any thing better than him, and to oppoſe our Will to his; he that doth ſo may well be diſmaid and troubled, and full of ſad apprehenſions; and he that ſincerely loves God, and chuſeth his Will in all things, is ſafe and undaunted, always pleaſed and happy.

CHAP. XVII.

The two former Rules explained and enlarged.

ACts beget and perfect Habits; and thus to make our actions and paſſions ſo many acts and demonſtrations of our Love to God, will ſpeedily increaſe that love, and ſoon bring us to perfect peace and happineſs.

But commonly it is thought, that to make it appear that we love God, we muſt do great and extraordinary things, fly up above other mens pitch, and always be as it were gazing and ſighing heaven-ward. This hath frighted many from a religious life, from devoting themſelves

selves to the love of *Jesus*: But the truth is that love is best expresst by doing well our ordinary actions, that which is our proper duty and employment.

Our greatest perfection here is contained in these two: 1. To do what God requires of us, and 2. To do it well. The first is to discharge the duties of that station wherein God hath placed us; *That every man where he is called, therein he should abide with God, and do his own business.* This is our task as we are men, and as we are Christians. Not to do things wonderful and inimitable; but faithfully to discharge what our place requires from us, to pay to all that love and obedience which Nature and Religion appoint; to follow our work, whatever it be, even the most servile labours, *as to the Lord and not to Men; knowing that whatever good thing any Man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.*

Græci studia transmarina sectantur, sed regnum Dei intra vos est. St. Aug.

Some enter a dark Cell, and some go long Pilgrimages; but wherever Providence had placed them there they might best have wrought their salvation. To do what we should do in a mean place,

place, is much better than to undertake great things, which we were not obliged to. The first frees us from, and the other doth ingage us into temptation. *The Commandment I give thee this day, is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off; it is not in Heaven, neither is it beyond the Sea; but the word is very nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou maist do it,* Deut. 30. 11. It maketh some Quakers, some fantastical, and some mad, the seeking to profess and to do strange things, things out of the road. And even in the best of all religious Institutes, there is nothing good, except it be this, that they are particular applications of the general Gospel Rules; which particular applications to times, persons and places, are best made by the designation of divine Providence, which to every man appoints that sphere, wherein he is bound to move regularly. Let us therefore humbly acquiesce in God's wise disposal, making that to be our study and work, which our state and condition doth require from us; and let our next care be, in the second place, to be intent upon that, and to do it well.

Nemo fugit adversarium de loco ad locum, sed de vitio ad virtutem. Faust. Serm.

In

In what appears before the world, commonly Men put a varnish upon their actions and their behaviour; when oftentimes at home they are loose, tyrannical, and unjust. But act in private and every where, *tanquam sub alicujus boni viri, ac semper præsentis oculis*, said *Seneca*; as always in the sight of God; in the most publick view. For your actions at home, in your Closet and in your Family, are noted and registred before God; and 'tis by the doing them well, that you advance forward towards perfection and glory.

Hoc age, hoc age, was often cried by a Herald whilst the Heathen worshipped their Gods; *Mind your business, mind that you are about.* That we must do in all actions, even them that relate only to this life, diligently and faithfully to do them as well as we can. The praise of an Actor on the stage of this world, is to act his part well and decently, whatever it be; and that must be our care, to be just and exact in being a good Servant or Master, Artist, or whatever it be. In so being consists our perfection, and the demonstration of our love to God.

So likewise in things that pertain to a better life; when you pray, read or meditate, do it with a serious intention, and the

the greatest application your mind is capable of. Do it as if you were now to die, and that were the last thing you shall ever do for God, and for your own Soul; for if you be in hast, in a hurry, and in a distraction, you wholly lose your time and your reward.

It is storied in some of the Legends, that at prayers St. *Bernard* saw divers Angels, noting down the behaviour of the assistants; some in golden Letters, some in Ink, and some in water only, according to the devotion or negligence of them that prayed. Though the relation looks much like a Fable, yet there is this truth in it, That they certainly weary themselves to no purpose who serve God without attention and without fervour, and do the business of their Soul in a careless and trifling way.

As Mathematicians consider an abstract quantity, not regarding whether of Gold or Clay; so it is not so much the matter of our actions, as the manner of doing them, that most recommends them to God, and makes them expressions of our love to *Jesus*.

As for the second Rule of bearing patiently whatever happens. It must be also extended to the meanest sorrows and vexations.

In

In all things let us be content that Gods Will ſhould take place. Let us carefully ſecure our duty, and afterwards let us care for no more; leave the event to God, and let him chuſe for us.

It is to no purpoſe to reſolve to bear evenly great calamities, which perhaps ſhall never happen; to gather a ſtock of patience againſt violent perſecutions, and the flames of Martyrdom; and mean while to be fretful and angry for every loſs and trifling accident that croſſeth our humor. This is but ſelf-deceit, and an imaginary patience, ſtoutly to reſolve upon great evils when they are far off, and yeild to leſſer when preſent. We are rather to remember the words of our Bleſſed Lord, *to take up our Croſs daily, and follow him.* The word *daily* imports, that the evils of every day are to be born with patience and a compoſed mind. And that the wrongs and vexations we meet withal in our intercourſe with others, as well as great calamities, are our own proper croſs, which our Chriſtian profeſſion, and love to *Jeſus*, obligeth us to bear and ſubmit to.

When a rough hewn Plank is to be joyned to one that is even, it muſt be plained and made ſmooth by great or ſmaller ſtroaks, at the workmans diſcretion; our de-

deform'd Souls, or crooked Will is to be close united to God, who is most equal and perfect, therein consists our happiness; we must therefore let, him (who is pleased to undertake that work) polish and rectifie our Souls, and make them conformable to his blessed Will, by what means he pleaseth; by great or lesser blows, according as he knows to be expedient. Let, us follow the Prince of Sufferings by love and imitation, chearfully bearing our Cross, whatever it be; mindful of this profitable advice of the Son of *Sirach*, *My Son, if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul for temptation; set thy heart aright and constantly endure, and make not haste in time of trouble. Whatsoever is brought unto thee take chcerfully, and be patient when thou art changed to a low estate. They that fear the Lord will not disobey his word, and they that love him will keep his ways.*

CHAP. XVIII.

Some more particular directions, how to order our lives by the Love of Jesus.

FRom the happy and safe Cloister of Love, wherein thou art entred, look not abroad upon that world that lies in wick-

wickedness; *Follow not the multitude to do evil*; for Men take hand in hand, and betray one another to folly and ruin. God's benefits art lost upon the major part of them; they have no sense of the divine mercies; Ungratitude is their proper Character, and their greatest guilt. *Rara fumant felicibus ara*; *All might easily be happy, if they would love and be thankful* Read the Lives of primitive Saints, and consider them that are now truly religious and good Men. Converse with them, and with them learn to spend thy time carefully and well. Time is short and precious, spend it upon that that will turn to account when time shall be no more. It leads to an endless Eternity, and it is given thee, to make that Eternity infinite in happiness, as in duration. Indulge not then to idleness, for it will bring temptations upon thee, and make them prevailing. *Labour, Watchfulness and Prayer, make us victorious over sin, and win the incorruptible Crown.*

Væ tibi flumen moris humani. Aug.

Use all means whereby thou maist be advanced in thy way to Heaven; thou canst never work out thy salvation with too much care and diligence. 'Tis good

Malo cautior esse

to

to make sure work in so great a concern; for multitudes perish through carelessness and presumption; and the way to eternal life is streight and narrow. But in the use of such means as I recommend, take heed of deceiving thy self, and resting in outward observations, making that the end, which is only a way to lead thee to vertue.

quam fortior; fortis enim sæpe captus est, cautus rarissime.

Thou maist carry thy Bible about, and read the Gospel, and yet not be a good Christian. Thou maist go up to the Temple to pray, fast, and give alms, and profess the greatest strictness with the Pharisee, and yet still be an hypocrite, except thou dost truly love God.

Οὐ γὰρ ἀρετὴ τοῦτο ἐστὶ Χρύσιππον ἀνεγνωκέναι.

Non *Hierosolymis fuisse; sed Hierosolymis bene vixisse laudandum.* Hieron.

Love therefore, and often think that thou shalt die; for that will much increase thy diligence and thy sincerity. Many in the Church of *Rome* put on when they die a Friers habit, and much confide therein; do thou put on by times thy dying thoughts, consider seriously, and steal time as often as thou canst, to sequester thy self from

the world. God's ſecret Voice is not heard in the croud, and no Man meditates in the Market. Retire and think of death, and put on the affections of a penitent; humility, ſhame, and ſorrow for thy paſt follies; care and watchfulneſs for that reſt of time which God gives thee to deſtroy thy ſins, and to ſave thy Soul. S. *Auſtin* on his death-bed would always have the Penitential Pſalms, ſaying, that every Chriſtian muſt die a Penitent. So muſt he live, that would live well; for Contrition and Mortification will make thee charitable and contented; will make thee deſpiſe the world, and chuſe the beſt and ſafeſt courſe of life, which if ſome think hard at the firſt, will ſoon by uſe become eaſie.

Deus dat ſpatium, ut pereant crimina, non homines. Proſp. Aquit.

Neminem Chriſtianum abſque pœnitentia mori oportere.

Optimam vitæ rationem deligendam, & brevi conſuetudine fiet jucunda

When Men have an opportunity to eat and drink, to obtain profit or pleaſure, they ſeldom neglect it, and put it off to uncertain delays: Now thou canſt, if thou wilt, ſerve God, ſhew thy love to *Jeſus*, and make ſure of Heaven; defer it not till

till time be past, or be worse. Think what thou wouldst advise thy Friend to do, and do thou act accordingly.

Often think upon thy reward and look up to Heaven; Hope sets the world at work. *Jacob*'s drudgery fourteen years seemed but a few days to him, because he had *Rachel* before his eyes, and loved her affectionately, *Gen.* 29. 30.

All is not to be done to day, go on in the way of love and duty. Our life is a course, not a leap; therefore faint not and be not displeased with thy self, if thou hast not yet done what must not be finisht, till thy life be so. S. *Anthony*'s impatience was thus reproved and cured by an Angel, *Work now, afterward pray, then refresh thy wearied nature; and after that, return again to thy labour and devotion. Let this be thy course all thy way, and salvation shall be thy end.*

Nunc paululum laborando manibus; nunc genibus flexis orando, deinde corpus reficiendo, post quiescendo, & rursus iterum operando; Anthoni, sic fac tu, & salvus eris.

Thus, betwixt Grace and Nature, betwixt Labour and Religion distribute thy time; and in all these, let the love of *Jesus* accompany and direct thee, and it will certainly bring thee to his glory;

after thou haſt in this manner lived in his favour, thou ſhalt enter into his joy. *I love them that love me* (ſaith the Lord) *and they that ſeek me early ſhall find me*, Prov. 8. 17.

CHAP. XIX.

That upon all accounts, God ſhould be loved above all things.

THe firſt Conſideration is, that it is moſt unjuſt and unreaſonable to love any Creature to the prejudice of the Creator. As all things have their being from God, ſo they have from him all the goodneſs and beauty which makes them lovely to us, and God drawing upon viſible objects fair Copies of his inviſible perfections, deſigned to be loved in them; or that they ſhould be loved in him, and for his ſake. *If men being delighted with the beauty of the heavenly Hoſt took them to be Gods, let them know how much better the Lord of them is, for the firſt Author of beauty hath created them; for by the beauty and greatneſs of the creatures proportionably the Maker of them is ſeen*, Wiſd. 13. 3. Beauty and Goodneſs are the proper object of love; and therefore, God who is the firſt and ſupreme beauty and goodneſs, ſhould be loved before all things.

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We indeed reverence Princes in their Seals and Arms, in their meaneſt Servants cloathed with their Livery; but ſhould a Subject ſet up theſe in the Royal Throne, and transfer to them, or even to the greateſt Favorite thoſe ſpecial honours which belong to the Prince only, he ſhould juſtly be deemed a Rebel, and his proceedings would be as unjuſtifiable, as the diſloyal diſtinction of *taking arms by the King's Authority againſt his Perſon.* Yet ſuch are the proceedings of all diſorderly Lovers, I mean of all Sinners; who ſetting more of their affections upon the Creatures, than upon God the Creator, pay them afterwards a greater veneration than they do to him; having exalted honours, pleaſures and riches into the Imperial Chair, they do more for them than for the Sovereign himſelf; nay, they obey them to his prejudice, and againſt his expreſs command. Thus vicious unreaſonable Men burn in the ſhade, and freeze where the Sun ſhines; they dote upon inferior Beauties, and neglect the higheſt and moſt perfect; they take fire at dark ſhadows, and find no heat in the brighteſt light. Great Men have a reſpect paid them, in their degenerating poſterity; great Artiſts are reſpected in their lifeleſs Children; we highly honour unhappy

Pagans in those labours of theirs, which adorn our Closets and Libraries: God only is dishonoured in his works; the more perfect he hath made them, the more injurious they prove to him. *Phidias* and *Apelles* are remembred with veneration in a fine picture or Statue: God only is ingratefully forgotten in a lovely Creature whereof he is Maker. An absurd impiety this is, which *Seneca* reproved in his fellow Heathen, To worship and deifie the carved Image, and to take notice of the Carver that made it.

Absurdum est genu posito simulacra adorare, & suspicere, fabros verò qui ea fecerunt contemnere.

God hath done like a loving Father, who jealous of his Sons affections, would have none to attend him but such as wear his Livery; would have the picture of himself hang in every Room; and all the goods in the House marked with his name and cypher: So God, who loves men tenderly, and desires to be by them loved again, hath put something of himself in all the Creatures he hath appointed to serve us; that which way soever we turn our eyes, we might be put in mind of him; he hath stamped his name in more or less legible Characters, upon all the goods

goods and utenſils of this great Houſe, the World, wherein he hath placed us. And now ſhall we do like a ſimple Child, who turning his back upon his Father, ſhould look and ſmile on his picture, and careſs it, and wait upon it and ask it bleſſing, while he ſlights the original? So abſurd a thing would be counted madneſs, and move pity or laughter; but when we act the ſame folly, in loving the world while we deſpiſe God, we are highly criminal, and we highly provoke our heavenly Father, thus to return to him contempt and diſobedience for the gracious tokens of his love.

From hence it follows, that, as we ſhould love God above all, and all things, in him and for him; we ſhould alſo love thoſe things moſt, which have moſt of his impreſs and likeneſs. Therefore Man, who is created after God's image, ſhould be by us loved above all other Creatures; and that part of Man which is chiefly adorned with the likeneſs of God ſhould have the greater ſhare of our affection. God himſelf values human Souls at a high rate, becauſe they are like him; as appears by what he hath done and ſuffered to ſave them. And for the ſame reaſon alſo, we ſhould pay to the Souls of Men the beſt part of that kindneſs we owe

them; and if we do not, we give our Friends no greater love than Children do their Puppets; for they dreſs them fine, and lay them ſoft, and kiſs and embrace them: Juſt as they who aim at nothing more, than to make their Friends merry, to wiſh them toys and gaudy things, and to ſee them at eaſe. A fondneſs inexcuſable in rational Creatures, eſpecially in Chriſtians, who know the worth of an immortal Soul, and the great concern of Eternity; and yet ſeek only to gratifie the material part of their Friends, which is ſubject to corruption, and to engage their affections to the world, which paſſeth away and they muſt ſoon leave. As if when King *Edward* the firſt was haſtning out of the Holy-land hither, to receive the Crown which expected him, his Friends had ſtaid him by the way, and invited him to reſt and eaſe, and provided for him all Princely delights and entertainments, and retarded his coming ſo long, till he had forgot or loſt his right and his Kingdom. *What is a Man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world and loſe his own Soul? and what ſhall a Man give in exchange for his Soul?*

We are indeed much commanded *to love one another*, and in this conſiſteth one great half of our Religion, all juſtice and cha-

charity, and all the duties of the second Table. To love our Brother as we ought, is the best demonstration of our love to God; for *he that says he loves God, and hateth his Brother, is a liar*, saith St. *John*, 1 Joh. 4. 20. and *love worketh no ill to his neighbour, and is therefore the fulfilling of the Law*, saith St. *Paul*, Rom. 13. 10. but a Man is to *love his neighbour as himself*, Mat. 19. 19. and therefore as he is most obliged to seek for himself *the kingdom of God and its righteousness*; so should he in the first place endeavour to procure it to his Friend. Or else we are *to love one another as Christ hath loved us*, Joh. 13. 33. and that was in redeeming our Souls, and purchasing for us heavenly joys and eternal life; not in providing ease and sensual pleasures to our bodies here in this world. The result of this is that in the first place we should love God infinitely, and for his own sake; and that in the next, we should love those things most which have a neareſt relation to God; Grace and Vertue, Religion, Holiness, and Men; especially their Souls, which are an image of the Deity; especially sanctified Souls, which are most like God. Afterwards our lesser love for less Divine Objects, may be reasonable and innocent; and however we have secured a great

duty and a great happineſs. *To love God with all the heart, and with all the underſtanding, and with all the ſoul, and with all the ſtrength, and to love his neighbour as himſelf, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and acrifices*, Mar. 13. 33.

CHAP. XX.

That as it is moſt juſt, ſo it is moſt eaſie to love God.

A Second conſideration may be, that it is moſt juſt and eaſie to love God. That it is moſt juſt, is ſhewn all along this diſcourſe, wherein I have repreſented the more general and moſt excellent benefits of God to mankind; all the which challenge and deſerve the greateſt Love our hearts are capable of. God had required of his People, that the Firſt-born and the Firſt-fruits ſhould be conſecrated to him, thereby to acknowledge him the author of all their bleſſings, and the giver of their increaſe. Now the Firſt-born of our Souls, the Firſt fruits of our hearts is love, which God, who gives us all things, demands, as an acknowledgment from us, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy Soul.*

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We therefore commit a greater Sacrilege, if we deny him so just a tribute, than if a Jew had robb'd him of his first Grapes, or of his first Ears of Corn. But it is so much the more just, in that it is most easie to love God. Infinite perfections, an abyss of Goodness, whence Rivers and Oceans of good things do perpetually flow, one would think should swallow up the hearts and affections of Men, as indeed it doth of all that duly consider it. And more perfectly of beatifi'd Saints, and of those blessed Spirits who minister before his Throne, and are all flame for him. Besides 'tis natural for Men to love what is theirs, propriety begets or increaseth love: Now God is our God; he hath given himself for us, he doth now, and will more intirely hereafter give himself to us; he made us for the enjoyment of himself, and for that purpose he hath redeemed us; and that we might all say, with *David*, *O God, thou art my God*, that God might shew his kindness and endear himself to us, and assert our right to him, he hath assumed the names of those relations who love us best, whom we love most tenderly, and whom we count most ours. God the Father is pleased to to be called our Father, God the Son our Brother, and God the Holy Ghost our Com-

Comforter, as it were our Friend; thereby to expreſs that affection which he hath for us, and the propriety which we may claim in him. Sure 'tis an eaſie thing to love them that love us; and where God hath expreſt ſo much love 'tis ſtrangely unnatural if we are not affected with it.

Nimis durus eſt animus, qui amorem ejus ultro non impendat; nolit tamen rependere. Aug.

Every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts, ſaith the Wiſe man, *Prov.* 19. 6. Now, what gifts hath our God given us! or rather, what gifts hath he not given us! and what perverſe violence do they offer nature that ſeek to confute *Solomon*'s ſaying in this inſtance where it ſhould be moſt true? Certainly, 'tis an eaſie thing to love infinite perfections, an infinite goodneſs; one that ever did, and ever doth us good; from whom we daily receive favours, ſo great and ſo many, that we can tell neither their worth nor number. Wherefore St. *Aug.* ſaith, that to love God is ſo natural, ſo eaſie, ſo infinitely juſt, and ſo much our duty, that to omit it can admit of no plea

Potes mihi dicere, non habeo quo tribuam egenti, non poſſum jejunare, non poſſum flere. Numquid potes mihi di-

plea nor pretence, and is inexcusable, and criminal in the highest degree. Perhaps thou wilt say, I cannot fast, I cannot weep, I have not what to give to the poor; but canst thou say, I cannot love God? is there any obstacle in thy way; dost thou want inducements, or a heart to do it? No, doubtless 'tis the easiest thing in the world to love him that is most lovely, to love our greatest Benefactor, to love him who is infinitely kind and loving to us. Some virtues require opportunities, and cannot be exercised for want of them; but whether thou beest sickly or healthy, whether thy condition be high or low, whether thy leisure be much or little, whether thy Calling be easie or laborious, thou maist love; Love doth not pinch the Belly, wearies not the Hands, makes not the Head ake, empties not the Purse; for Love is neither grief nor pain, 'tis easie to all Men, none can plead any excuse against it.

cere charitatem habere non possum &c.

Facilis res est, Domine Jesu Christe *superamunde, dilectio tua, à qua nullus cujuscunque status, gradus, aut conditionis existat excusari potest, &c.*

Chap.

CHAP. XXI.

An Objection anſwered, which might be raiſed againſt this Book and its Subject.

NOw here I will digreſs a little to anſwer two Objections, which poſſibly might be made againſt what I have ſaid of Divine Love. The firſt, that I have humanized it too much; that whereas it is ſupernatural and ſhould be ſpiritual, I have made it almoſt palpable and ſenſible. To this I ſay, that whether we ſet our love upon earthly or heavenly things, upon God or upon the World, ſtill it is the ſame paſſion, which reſides in the ſame human faculty. The Will of Man, and the effects thereof are alike evident and real. He that truly loves God, hath that ſame hearty affection, as to the kind, as one Friend hath for another; only being joyned with greater reverence and ſubmiſſion to ſo glorious a Majeſty, it is called *Religious* and *Devout*. But a ſincere lover of *Jeſus* will ſeek to pleaſe him, and to be with him, and to enjoy him, and do all that for him, which Men would do for thoſe whom they love heartily; all the difference is, that Divine Love hath its proper expreſſions, can never be too great, and

is

is in all respects infinitely more excellent than the love of any Creature. Therefore, if in some places I have represented things plainly, and made that in some manner to be touched by sense, which is only the object of Faith, my design was thereby to move the affections, and to bring down the notions of Religion from the head into the heart. *Faith* should *be the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, Hebr.* 11. 1. We should consider things of Faith, whether past or to come, as if they had now a real subsistence, as if they were present before our eyes; their greatness then would be better viewed, and have the greater power upon us; as Moses, who by consideration *seeing him who is invisible*, ver. 27. was thereby enabled to prefer the afflictions of God's People to the pleasures and dignities of the Courts of *Pharaoh*. I believe it was a great advantage to the Piety of Primitive ages, that they lived near the time when those things were acted, which we now believe at a greater distance; for then the Revelations of the New Testament were every Christians discourse and admiration; the proximity of the times made them almost visible, and the recent footsteps of those great transactions gave them a kind of sensibility, whereby their thoughts and considerations were

were drawn and retained, and made serious and efficacious. And I believe it may be a great cause of the degeneracy of these after Ages, that Faith is become too notional, too Metaphysical and abstracted, a matter of dispute and science, rather than of practice and conscience; whereas we should vest the great objects of our Faith with material circumstances, to make them in some manner the object of sense, that to us it might be said, as S. *Paul* to the *Galatians*; *Before your eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you*, Gal. 3. 1. that, in all other instances, our Faith might be to us *the evidence of things not seen.* When we look upon the things of Revelation as far distant from us, they appear hardly credible, and not much to be regarded; but a closer viewing of them, by a nearer and almost sensible consideration would make them appear great and wonderful, would make deep and lasting impressions on our minds, and cause us to cry out with grief and wonder; Lord, what is Man that thou art thus mindful of him! or rather, what is Man, that he is unmindful of thee! However, I have the Warrant, and do Claim the priviledge of them that write Meditations, and make Contemplations palpable and to be seen; to suppose Dialogues, to describe

ſcribe what was paſt long ago, as now in doing, and to repreſent things as preſent and viſible; and well we may, eſpecially when we treat of the Love of God ſhewed to mankind in *Jeſus*; for that Love became palpable, and converſt amongſt Men, and was manifeſted to ſenſe in the birth, the actions, and the ſufferings of our bleſſed Saviour; who by becoming Man, ſeemed to comply with that unjuſt and yet general deſire which Men had of worſhiping human Creatures, and having things viſible and material for the object of their devotion and Religious love.

CHAP. XXII.

The ſecond Objection concerning the Love of Jeſus, *anſwered.*

THe other Objection would perhaps be made by them who ſcruple and refuſe to bow at the Holy Name of *Jeſus*, and who might ſay, that I have mentioned it too often, and too often call'd Divine Charity, The Love of *Jeſus*; and that in ſo doing I have been either ſuperſtitious or injurious to God. To this I anſwer, That as our Bleſſed Saviour ſaith, *He that hateth me, hateth my Father alſo*, Joh. 15. 23.

23. ſo we may ſay, that he that loveth him, loveth his Father alſo: for the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt are all one and the ſame, God bleſſed for ever; *He that loveth him that begat, loveth him alſo that is begotten*, and ſo reciprocally. The Divine Eſſence is but one, it admits of no diviſion; therefore whatever honour is paid to one of the Divine Perſons, is paid to all three; the Ever glorious Trinity is honoured by it. But then it muſt be conſidered, that *Jeſus*, the ſecond perſon of that Bleſſed and glorious Trinity, is not only God, but alſo Man, and ſo Mediator betwixt God and Man; ſo that by and through him we pray, we worſhip, we love God. This is the great, the moſt excellent benefit of God to his Church, that he gave *Jeſus Chriſt* his Bleſſed Son to be the head of it; who prays for us, and prays in us, and is prayed to by us, as S. *Aug.* ſaith. *Qui orat pro nobis, orat in nobis; & oratur à nobis.* As God manifeſted his love to Men in *Jeſus*; ſo in *Jeſus* Men offer the returns of their love to God: *In this was manifeſted the love of God towards us, becauſe God ſent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him*, 1 Joh. 4. 9. and in this is manifeſted our love towards God, that we receive and love,

love, and obey that bleſſed Son. With this God is in no wiſe offended, but rather infinitely well pleaſed; *he that loveth me ſhall be loved of my Father*, ſaith our Bleſſed Saviour, Joh. 14. 21. *If a Man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him*, ver. 23. And again, *If any Man ſerve me, him will my Father honour*, Joh. 12. 26. Nay, he expreſly tells his Diſciples, that the Father loved them, becauſe they loved him, whom the Father had ſent; *The Father himſelf loveth you becauſe ye have loved me*, Joh. 16. 27. For though we owe our Redemption to the infinite mercies of God, Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt; yet in a more eſpecial manner we are engaged to the Son, who perſonally came down from Heaven, *for us Men and for our ſalvation*. Jeſus *is the author and finiſher of our Faith*, he is the Founder of our Holy Religion; it is he hath given us thoſe Laws and Precepts whereby we are to live; it is he from whom we are called Chriſtians; it is he, who for us *deſpiſed the ſhame, and endured the Croſs*, who hath ſhed his Blood, and given his Life a ranſom for ours; it is he who by contracting a near relation with us, becoming our Brother, hath cauſed us to be adopted Sons of God, and heirs with him

him of an eternal kingdom; it is he who can ſave them to the uttermoſt that come to God by him; it is he who is the Head of the Church, to whom we muſt be united by Love, that we may be his members, and derive life from him; it is he who is our Lord and Maſter, and will be our Judge and our Rewarder, if we be faithful to him. *For this end Chriſt died and roſe again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living*, ſaith St. *Paul*, Rom. 14. 9. *God hath made that ſame* Jeſus, *whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Chriſt, him God hath exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and Saviour*, ſaith St. *Peter*, Act. 2. 36. and 5. 31. *All power is given him in Heaven and Earth*; and *muſt Reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet*. Hence the frequent and urgent exhortations to follow & imitate, to ſerve & obey *Jeſus*; Hence thoſe pathetick words of St. *Paul*, *The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us*, 2 Cor. 5. 14. And again, *What things were gain to me I counted loſs for Chriſt; yea doubtleſs, and I count all things loſs for the excellency of the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt my Lord, for whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count them but dung*

Caput poſitum in cæleſtibus corpus ſuum gubernat, ſeparatum quidem viſione ſed annexum Charitate. Aug.

dung that I may win Christ, Phil. 3. 7, 8. 'Tis *Jesus* hath won our hearts to God; 'Tis he hath reconciled us from a state of Enmity to a state of Love. Besides, that God was justly angry for our rebellions, his glories are so bright, so amazing, his Divine Majesty so high, that to love a Being so infinitely above us, might have been thought prophaness or presumption; respect, not friendship, is the affection of Subjects to Princes. Φοβερὸς Θεὸς was an ordinary Epithite for the Heathen gods, who were thought to be envious rather than loving to Men; and even the *Israelites* were amazed and terrified at the sight of a heavenly Messenger, crying, *We shall die, for we have seen God.* 'Tis the great humiliation of *Jesus*, hath procured and established an everlasting reconciliation and friendship betwixt God and Man. *God commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us*, Rom. 5. 8. and now, *there is neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor any other creature can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*, Rom. 8. 39.

Non bene conveniunt nec in una sede morantur, Majestas & Amor.

Therefore for a reward of the great sufferings and abasement of *Jesus*, God hath given

given him a ſupreme Authority over all the world; *Men and Angels being made ſubject unto him; becauſe he made himſelf of no reputation, and took on him the form of a ſervant, and humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Croſs; therefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that* at *the name of* Jeſus *every thing ſhould bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue ſhould confeſs, that* Jeſus Chriſt *is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father,* Phil. 2. 7, 8. &c. Our love and obedience to *Jeſus* derogates nothing from, but belongs to God: *'Tis to the glory of God the Father.* God hath highly exalted *Jeſus* for his humiliation, and for the ſame cauſe we ought alſo to love and exalt him as much as poſſibly we can, becauſe it was for us; not only bow at his name, but even kneel and kiſs the ground, when he only ſees us; no fear of exceeding here, no fear of ſuperſtition; we can never ſhew him too much love or reſpect, *Pſal. 72. All Kings ſhall fall down before him, all Nations ſhall do him ſervice: Prayer ſhall be made ever unto him, and daily ſhall he be praiſed.* Amen.

Chap.

CHAP. XXIII.

That it is moſt pleaſant and ſafe to love God.

A Third Conſideration will be, that it is moſt pleaſant and ſafe to love God. Love may cauſe trouble, but it certainly is the ſpring or parent of all joy and ſatisfaction. He that hath an affection to nothing, hath pleaſure in nothing; could the imaginary inſenſibleneſs of the Stoicks really ſeize upon any Man, if he could never be miſerable, he would alſo be uncapable of all happineſs. 'Tis true indeed, that the love of worldly things, in that they are vain and periſhing, is it ſelf vanity and vexation; *qui multum amat, plus dolet*, is certainly true of all but the Divine Love. He that hath many friends hath many ſorrows; he that loves many things hath many things to fear for: 'Tis only God that hath thoſe infinite excellencies, which can fully repleniſh our minds and deſires: 'Tis only God that admits of *no variableneſs, neither ſhadow of turning*; and therefore 'tis the love of God alone, that can make us eternally and entirely happy. It is reported of a perſon of great ſanctity, that an evil Spirit confeſt to him, that were it poſſible for one who loves God

God to come into Hell; yet were it impossible he should be miserable, but that it would rather sink Hell it self, and make it disappear, or else make it a Paradise for him. Though the relation may be fabulous, yet I believe the thing it self is true; he that is joyned to God by love, and so possest of him, who is the fountain of all Joy and Bliss, it is not possible he can be miserable; Despair, the hell of the damned can never seize his Soul. However, I am confident that the love of God would sweeten all the bitterness of our innocent miseries, that it is only the imperfection of a Christians love, that exposeth his mind to the vexation of human sorrows. I am not (to my grief) a competent witness to this truth; but there have been many Saints and devout persons, who, in the fervency of their love to God, have found those joys, those ravishments of joy which are ineffable, and which made them, in some manner insensible and incapable of any great sorrow. And even the lesser love of more imperfect, though sincere Christians, doth in a great measure take away the sense of human calamities, and brings to their minds

Nihil crus sentit in nervo, dum animus est in Cœlo.

minds the greatest contentment and delight this world is capable of.

A mans heart is more where it loves than where it lives; *He that loveth dwelleth in God, and God in him,* 1 Joh. 4. 16. and what greater, what more excellent Bliss can we imagine or desire? what stronger expression could one find to express the highest felicities? *to dwell in God!* to be swallowed up in an abyss of infinite goodness! to be overwhelmed in the immensity of Divine Joys and perfection! as an atom in the air, as a drop of water in the Ocean; so *he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God.* Nothing can better represent those transcendent and delicious raptures wherewith the Soul is inebriated and raised above it self. This was it made the holy Martyrs shout and rejoyce in the midst of the flames; they *dwelt*

Magis est ubi amat, quam ubi animat?

Deus Charitas est, quid pretiosius? & qui manet in Charitate, in Deo manet, quid securius? & Deus in eo, quid jucundius? Bern.

Extasin facit amor, amatores suo statu dimovet, sui juris esse non sinit. Dionys. de divin. nom.

in God; no sorrow, no harm could approach them. Happy are they that can say with St. *Paul*, *Our life is hid with Christ in God*, Col. 3. 3. and *I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*, Gal. 2. 20. The Love of God fits us for the joys of Heaven, and is an anticipation of them; it powerfully governs the Will, and it sweetly overflows the Mind; it is the perfection of Grace, and will be the consummation of Glory; but 'tis much easier and happier to feel than to express it. *How much better is thy love than wine, and the smell of thine ointment than all spices?* Cant. 4. 10.

One thing that adds much to the worth and the pleasure of Divine Love, is that it never fails; it is of the nature of its object, eternal, as God is; *whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away; but Charity never faileth*, 1 Cor. 13. 8. Faith and Hope may accompany us as far as Heaven gate, but there they forsake us; the one is turned into sight, and the other into enjoyment; Love alone enters and abides with us to eternity. Our greatest safety therefore, as well as pleasure, consists in loving God affectionately; for that Love which *never faileth* secures our duty here, and our happiness hereafter. We are sure never

never to live, and never to perish in sin, if we love *Jesus* sincerely; *He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God*; and there neither sin nor misery can come to hurt him. "What matters it "then to be by nature "what we may be by choice and affection? *Quid refert natura esse, quod potes effici voluntate?* Chrysost.

If of our selves we are not holy and happy, we may be so by Love; the love of God will transform us into his nature, and make us partakers of his holiness and happiness. Love kills us in our selves, that we may live in God; *Occidit quod fuimus, ut simus quod non eramus*, Aug. It maketh such a change in us, that we are no longer what we were, as to the sinfulness and wretchedness of our condition. *The New Commandment maketh the New Creature; Men become gods by loving God.* *Mandato novo facit hominem novum, homines amando Deum Dii efficiuntur.* Aug. Love considers and dischargeth all the duties of Religion; it allows of no omission nor transgression; *Love is the fulfilling of the Law; this is love, that we keep his Commandments*, 2. Joh. 6. *Ille sancte & juste agit, qui sanctam habet dilectionem.*

Non faciunt boni vel malas mores, nisi boni vel mali amores. Aug.

Aug. He is a holy Man whose love is holy, for Love having the rule and direction of all Mans passions and affections, they become either good or bad according to the nature of what they love. Therefore to know whether a Man be vertuous or no, we enquire not what his condition is, or what are his parts and learning; but what he delights in, what he loves; for if he loves the world and himself, he is certainly vain and vicious; but if he loves God, he is pious and good, and of a certainty he can never perish.

If natural Love be so powerful and active as we know it is; how much more when it is set upon God, and by him assisted? This therefore doth greatly manifest how secure and well guarded they are that love God, in that their holy love masters and mortifies their unholy affections. What is it that buries Men to Sin and Hell, and destruction, but their masterless and unruly passion? now Love cannot only subdue them, but even makes them useful and subservient to vertue; the Love of God sanctifies all passions, and makes them serviceable. If it cannot make him meek who is of an angry nature, it will make him

him angry against sin, and against himself a sinner; if it doth not make him bold and generous whose temper inclines him to timorousness; it will turn his fear into prudence, and make him not dare to offend God; if it makes him not cheanful who naturally is melancholy; it will turn his sadness into penitent sorrow, and make him a *blessed Mourner*. And so all other passions, Love will make them instruments of vertue, or occasions of a greater reward; that is, it will either fight and conquer them, or else put them to a good use. Love is obeyed wherever it appears, and Divine Love is irresistible; it overcomes all difficulties, nay, it scorns the name of difficulties, saith St. *Augustin*; *It is as strong and victorious as Death.*

Amor ubi venerit, cæteros in se traducit & captivat affectus. St. Bern.

Nomen difficultatis erubescit.

Happy and safe are they that love *Jesus*; for that Love it is makes the difference betwixt sincere and false Christians, betwixt those that shall be Heirs of salvation

Charitas est donum Dei quo nullum est excellentius: solum est quod dividit inter filios reg-

ni æterni, & filios perditionis. Aug. de Trin. lib. 15. cap. 18.

and those that shall go to perdition, betwixt Heaven and Hell. Many privileges may belong to the Tares while they grow in the same field with the Wheat; many Sunshine days they may have, and many drops of Dew and Rain may fall upon them; but they are not *rooted and grounded in love*, therefore they are plucked up and withered, and burned. Many gifts of the Divine Spirit and wicked Men may receive; they may *prophesy and do miracles in Christs name*; they may excel in some virtues; but the grace of Charity they never receive, the love of God never dwells in their hearts. "Thou "maist be baptized "(saith St. *Aug.*) and "yet not be good; "thou maist have "knowledge and re-

Habere Baptismum & malus esse potes; habere, &c. Tract. 7. in Epist. Johan.

"main vicious; thou maist be called "a Christian, and be none; but thou "canst not love God and be wicked; "thou canst not love God, but thou "must be holy and happy. Thus we see, Love affords the greatest pleasure, and the greatest safety this world is capable of.

of. The love of *Jeſus* is a precious Jewel, precious beyond gold and the beſt of pearls; he that hath it, hath an infinite treaſure, and it is ſo much the more to be valued, becauſe we may acquieſce in its poſſeſſion; we can never loſe it except we will. We may loſe our riches, & we may loſe our health; we may loſe our learning and our eloquence; we may loſe our friends and our lives; but the love of God we can never looſe without our conſent; no time, no fortune, no Tyrant can ſnatch it by force out of our hearts; as 'tis never given againſt our will, ſo againſt our will it can never be taken away. *Charity never faileth.* O *Lord, who haſt taught us, that all our doings without Charity are nothing worth, ſend thy Holy Ghoſt, and pour into our hearts that moſt excellent gift of Charity the very bond of Peace and of all vertues, without which whoſoever liveth is counted dead before thee; grant this for thine only Son Jeſus Chriſt ſake* Amen.

Charitas eſt amor rerum quas non niſi volentes amittimus. Aug.

Verbum bonum illud eſt, quod non poteſt in vitus amittere, Aug.

Quinquageſima Sunday.

CHAP. XXIV.

That Love brings the most lasting joy and satisfaction to the Soul.

THe fourth and last Consideration is, That the love of God is the solid joy and lasting tranquility of the Soul. No tormenting fear or sadness can harbour in a heart that loves God; the Motto of Love might well be that of a late order of Knighthood at *Mantua*, meant of the Holy Chalice, *Nihil isto triste recepto*; Grief and the love of God are incompatible; no sadness should enter that Breast wherein dwells Divine Love. I need not treat at large of those many doubts and terrors concerning future happiness, which grieve and almost distract the hearts of many Christians, to prove that it is a happy thing to be freed from them; there are few, but are so far acquainted with them as readily to assent to it; it will be more to purpose to shew that the Love of God is the best remedy against them, the best Balsom to heal *a wounded Spirit*. Some persons from their poverty, bodily pains, or other afflictions draw this most afflictive inference, that God is not their friend, and that therefore their condition is dangerous and very bad, if not

quite

quite desperate. And this adds such a weight to their Cross, that they have no strength to bear it, but are ready to sink; whereas the Love of God hath enabled thousands to bear a heavier with patience, with fortitude, and even with chearfulness; *I take pleasure in infirmities, and distresses, and necessities, for Christs sake,* said St. *Paul*, that great lover of Jesus. He that would suffer for God, will suffer from God; he that would die and be crucified for Jesus will willingly bear that Cross which Jesus lays upon his shoulders. And indeed 'tis a greater vertue, meekly, and thankfully to accept of that correction wherewith God visits us, than voluntarily to inflict the greatest sufferings on our selves; what proceeds from God is ever best for us, and most pleasing to him. No *Patient* will question the love of that *Physician* who is his intimate friend; for that he makes incisions, and applies caustick upon him, and makes him drink bitter portions; all this he takes to be for his own good, as proceeding from his friends affection, after this manner, he that loves God will receive afflictions from him; and gratefully acknowledge with *David, I know that of very faithfulness thou hast caused me to be troubled.* Knowing that *all things work together*

either for the good of them that love God; he will harbour no thoughts of diffidence, nor question Gods loving kindness to him; but rests satisfied, that while he loves God nothing can hurt him, and that whatever happens is certainly for his greater advantage.

But 'tis not always the storms of Adversity that bring those dark and dismal Clouds on the minds of men; they come sometimes in fair weather, in the greatest prosperity. Whence 'tis in vain to examine; better it is to drive them away, for they are as mischievous as black. They cast a damp upon Mens spirits, and freeze their hearts in such a manner that they can receive no spiritual joy; they so weaken their hands and feet, that they can hardly work for God, or walk in his ways: so that their condition is sad indeed, not because God is their enemy, but because they being unreasonably afraid of it, are thereby hindred from being his friends. To this evil none can prescribe a better remedy than Love; let such persons love God heartily, and all these terrors will vanish away like the vain images of a terrible dream, when one awaketh. Love begets love, therefore we should love God, *because he first loved us*, and love begets a confidence of being loved again: so that if we love God,

God, we shall not long doubt but that we are loved by him; and then all is well. And if at first our hearts do not melt into devout affections, and are not replenished with the sweetness and comfort of love, let us not be dismayed at it, nor too much study our own disturbed thoughts and apprehensions, but let us continue to give God demonstrations of love, to abstain from what he forbids, and to do that which he commands, or that which will please him, though uncommanded; and then either holy joys and extasies will come, or it will be as well without them. No Man is afraid of his friends, nor of those whom he serves and obligeth; we easily suppose that they love us whom we love, and that they to whom we do good will be kind to us; therefore let us shew to God all the love we can, and by words and actions protest that we seek to please him, and our hearts will soon be possest with a blessed assurance that we are dear to him, and that he will never be cruel and severe to us. "Tis reported of a Religious Person, "whose Soul was grieved and wounded "with doubts and fears, and with sadness, "that while he was one day weeping and "praying thus. O that I were sure that I "shall persevere and never fall from God! "O that I were sure that God loves me,

"and

"and that I shall one day see his blessed "Face! How zealous then would I be in "mortifying my sins, and doing my duty! "how chearfully would I serve God every "day, and take pleasure in suffering for "him? how would I despise the world "and its vanities, and fix my thoughts and "affections on things above! While he "was thus expressing the sorrows of his "troubled mind, he heard the whispers "of a secret voice, which told him, *fac* "*quod faceres*, do now what thou wouldest "do if thou hadst all those assurances, with "this he found himself so affected and "refreshed, that he took it as an Oracle "from heaven, and in obeying of it found "those comforts he begged. Better counsel I cannot give thee; *fac quod faceres*, do what thou wouldst do, if they diffident timorousness and jealousies were confuted by a voice from heaven, and they will soon be removed. Let thy meek submission, thy sincere obedience, and thy free-will Offerings speak thy love to God; and thou shalt soon find thy self perswaded that God loves thee dearly, and that thy condition is safe and happy. Other assurance we are not to expect in this world, and this is not to be obtained any other way; should thy comfort proceed from any thing else but thy humble and devout love to God,

it

it would be fancy and presumption; whereas so, it is well grounded and never can deceive thee. *There is no fear in love* (saith Divine S. *John.* 1 Ep. 4. 18.) *but perfect love casteth out fear*; 'tis never otherwise; grace and nature joyn together to make the effect infallible, that a Holy Love should ever produce a Holy Peace; if we love *indeed and in truth, thereby* (not by new and secret revelations) *we shall know that we are of the truth, and we shall assure our hearts before God*, 1 Joh. 3. 18. Love may well work confidence and joy in our Souls, for it injoys already what it loves; it is *affectuosa unitas, & unitiva affectio*, love is inseparable from its object, and the essence thereof consists in their union, and in some manner unity; as our Blessed Saviour pray'd for his; *that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us*, Joh. 17. 21. and that this is effected by love, he adds, *ver. 26. that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them.* Though God be exalted infinitely above all things, in a sphere of Glory and Majesty so high that the Cherubims with their many wings cannot fly up to it; yet thither love soars up and takes God, and holds him as his own; so that every

Qui mente integrâ Deum desiderat, profectò jam habet quem amat. Greg. Mag.

every one that loves God is already possest of him, and may say with the Spouse, *I am my Beloved, and my Beloved is mine Cant.* 6. 3.

Magna res est amor quo anima per semet-ipsam fiducialiter accedit ad Deum, &c. St. Aug.

"We come to God by love, *amando non ambulando* and to him we are united by love; "*amore Deo conjungimur*; therefore love "is a great thing, (saith "that devout Father) "it brings the Soul "to God with an holy "confidence, and makes it trust in him, "and cleave stedfastly to him, and rejoyce "in him, and represent her needs, and "beg his mercies with fiducial and devout "affections. And this is so great a truth, that Death it self with its pains and sorrows alters nothing of it; even then in the last Agonies, the love of God sweetens the bitter Cup, and still entertains the Soul with joy and holy comforts. It was the saying of S. *Aug.* "That because the Soul "hath willingly forsaken God whom she "should love infinitely, she is forced there- "fore with grief and regret to forsake her "Body, which she loves too much; and "that because she voluntarily departed "from God who is her life, she there- "fore departeth from the Body whose life she is, with sadness and much reluctancy

stancy. *Aug. de Trin. lib. 4. cap.* 13. Now we may say, that when the Soul returns to God by love, she is freed from this punishment, and restored to her first liberty, she is willing to die for to be with Christ; and then comes a chearful *cupio dissolvi, O when shall I come and appear before God!* Happy is he who living doth so manifest his love to God by Piety and Charity, that dying he can say with *Theodosius*, *Dilexi*; love hath been the business and delight of my life, I have daily endeavoured by my actions to declare the sincerity of my love to God; he is doubtless of the number of those *that love the appearing of* Jesus; and so he goes out to meet him with, joy and confidence, expecting a kind reception from him, *whom having not seen, yet he loved*, and worshipped and served affectionately. Let no Man that loves God, doubt of Gods love to him; for he that loved us when we were his enemies, so as to die for us, will much more love us when we have for him the hearty affections of friends. It is the joy of Heaven, the joy of the Holy

Charitas libertatem donat, timorem pellit, &c. S. Bern.

Nemo se amari diffidat, qui jam amat: libenter Dei amor nostrum quem prævenit subsequitur &c. Bern.

Holy *Jeſus*; when his loving kindneſs hath won and conquered our hearts, and 'tis our greateſt joy, 'tis for us a Heaven upon Earth, when we love him faithfully and fervently, with all our Souls and affections. The Love of God brings that peace to the Soul, which the world can neither give nor take away. *O ſweet Jeſu, O look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou uſeſt to do unto thoſe that love thy name*, Pſal. 119. 132.

CHAP. XXV.

The Concluſion.

NOw who can refuſe to love God, when 'tis a thing ſo juſt and reaſonable, ſo pleaſant and eaſie, ſo ſafe and advantagious, ſomething of neceſſity we muſt love, every Mans heart is full of that paſſion, and every Mans life is governed by it: 'tis but conſidering who hath done moſt for us, and whom we are moſt obliged to love; who is moſt lovely, and who will beſt reward our love; and we ſhall ſoon underſtand that God is to be loved above all things, infinitely, without meaſure; and if we love our ſelves as we ſhould, we ſhall eaſily remove our affe-

affections from the world, to set them upon God and Eternity, upon *Jesus* and his Kingdom. Love, as we have seen, will make it ease and delightful to do our duty, will make the yoke of Christ light, and enable us with strength and courage to bear our Cross chearfully like Christians; it will lead us the shortest and the safest way to Heaven, and make our journey pleasant; it will make us dear to God, and to his Saints and blessed Angels, and fill our hearts with peace and comforts; it will abide with us when we are forsaken by the world, and all our friends can do us no good; it will accompany us when we go from hence, and open Heavens gate, and enter in with us; there to perfect our happiness which it here began; to be there our reward as it was here our work and our duty. I may now upon too too just an account use the words of St. *Bernard*; What I have written is not what I do, but what I should do, what I grieve that I do not, what I endeavour to do, and what I wish all others might do. But withal I shall plead for my self the advice

Non quod ego ista faciam dico, sed quod facere vellem. &c. Ber. Med.

Μὴ θέλε εἶναι πικρὸς δικαστὴς τῶν λόγῳ μεγάλα διδασκόντων, ὁρῶν αὐτὸς, &c. Joh. Clim. grad. 26. §. 18.

advice of a Greek Father, Not to judge too severely of those who teach excellent lessons, great and profitable. Truths which they themselves learn and practice but very imperfectly; because, the usefulness of their instructions may make some amends for the defects of their performance, *Ephes.* 6. 24. *Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity.* Amen.

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